

INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM**Number:** DAO 202-451**Effective Date:** 1990-08-14**SECTION 1. PURPOSE.**

.01 This Order prescribes Department of Commerce policies, procedures, and requirements for incentives based on performance, one-time special achievements, and other superior accomplishments which improve Government operations and services. The Incentive Awards Program of the Department is designed to motivate employees to increase productivity and creativity by rewarding those whose job performance and ideas benefit the Government and are substantially above normal job requirements and performance standards.

.02 This extensive revision represents a reissuance of this DAO. Therefore, text change highlighting is not shown, in accordance with DAO 200-3.

SECTION 2. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

.01 Scope . This Order applies to all incentive awards that the Department grants or for which the Department offers nominations.

.02 References. This revision implements and supplements Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) Chapters 430, 451, 531 and 540. Other documents which describe systems or programs related to the incentive awards program are:

DAO 202-430 Performance Appraisal System for the Senior Executive Service - Appendix A

DAO 202-430 Performance Management and Recognition System - Appendix B

DAO 202-430 Performance Appraisal System for the General Workforce - Appendix C

DAO 202-920 Executive Personnel and Policy Manual

DAO 202-452 Incentive Awards for Federal Inventors

DAO 202-453 Awards for the Disclosure of Fraud, Waste or Mismanagement

DAO 202-454 Suggestion Program Foreign Service Applicable Provisions for Foreign Service Employees Act of 1980

Foreign Affairs Awards for Foreign Service Americans and Foreign Service Nationals Manual, Vol. 3

33 U.S.C. 853R NOAA Corps: Personnel Board

NDM 56-68.05 NOAA Corps Uniform Regulations (Awards)

B-233607 (10/26/89) Comptroller General Decisions (payment of travel expenses to attend honor awards ceremonies) and 55 CG-800 (1976)

65 CG-738 (1986) Comptroller General Decisions (payment for refreshments for awards ceremonies)

.03 Policy. The policy of the Department is to:

a. Encourage employees toward increased productivity and creativity and to support and enhance achievement of Departmental and national goals;

b. Grant recognition based on the high-level performance of employees or on the value of their contribution to the Federal Government;

c. Design and administer recognition programs which are nondiscriminatory in application and effect;

- d. Use incentives for their intended purpose and not as substitutes for other personnel actions or pay;
- e. Consider employee contributions for applicability throughout the Department or Government;
- f. Give due weight to incentive awards when considering employees for promotion;
- g. Emphasize the importance to managers and supervisors of incentives in motivating employees and improving Government operations: and
- h. Allocate adequate budget, staffing and support services to assure prompt action on awards and employee suggestions, and effective promotion and publicity activities.

.04 Timing. To have the maximum effectiveness as incentives for excellent performance, nominations for recognition must be initiated and sent to the servicing personnel office promptly. Supervisors must maintain the timeframes specified throughout this Order and should make every effort to provide prompt recognition of noteworthy accomplishments by their employees when specific timeframes are not given.

.05 Confidentiality of Nominations. Documentation in support of recommendations for recognition is privileged information and made available only to those involved in the awards decision process and other officials on a need-to-know basis. As a general rule, recommendations are not to be discussed with nominees or with anyone not involved in the decision process until the award has been approved within the Department; or in the case of external award nominations, until the nominee has been selected by the Department as its nominee. When nominations for external awards require personal information (e.g., date of birth, home address, professional affiliations, employment history), operating **units** must obtain permission from the nominee(s) before submitting the information to the Department.

.06 Grievability. DAO 202-771, "Employee Grievances," describes the applicability of grievance procedures to awards and other forms of recognition covered by this Order.

SECTION 3. FORMS OF RECOGNITION.

.01 Cash Awards.

- a. Cash awards (one-time, lump-sum payments) may be granted for various reasons such as performance or superior accomplishments (special acts or services, suggestions, or inventions). The Department may grant cash awards ranging from \$25 to \$10,000. Those over \$10,000 require the Office of Personnel Management's approval.
- b. Cash awards for superior accomplishments may be granted to groups of employees as covered in Appendix E.
- c. Normally, cash awards are paid by the operating **unit** or **units** benefiting from the contribution. When an award is paid to an employee in another operating **unit** or another Federal agency, arrangements must be made to reimburse the employing agency. If the amount of the award is less than \$200, the employing agency absorbs the award costs in accordance with 5 CFR 451.105(b) and 5 USC 4502(d).
- d. A cash award is additional compensation and not a part of the basic annual salary of the employee. The payment is subject to Federal and State withholding taxes, Social Security, and Medicare deductions. Cash awards are neither subject to retirement fund contributions nor creditable for inclusion in the "high three" average pay computation for retirement benefits. A cash award does not affect the computation of salary differentials.

.02 Non-Monetary Awards. Non-monetary awards are medals, certificates, plaques, **citations**, badges, or other award items that can be worn or displayed and have an award or honor connotation. These awards are used to recognize distinguished achievements or significant contributions that benefit the Government.

.03 Combination Non-monetary and Cash Awards. These awards are usually honorary in nature with a cash honorarium accompanying the recognition. Awards in this category are either Presidential or special awards developed to meet specific conditions and recognition needs.

SECTION 4. TYPES OF RECOGNITION.

The various types of recognition, policies, eligibility criteria, and processing requirements are described in detail in the appendices. Briefly, they are:

.01 Performance-based Recognition for General Workforce and Foreign Service Employees and NOAA Corps Officers. Performance-based recognition for these groups includes performance awards, Quality Step Increases (QSI's), and Meritorious Service Increases (MSI's). (See Appendix A.)

.02 Performance Management and Recognition System (PMRS) Performance Awards. These awards are based on ratings of record and recognize high level performance by PMRS employees. (See Appendix B.)

.03 Performance Recognition for the Senior Executive Service (SES). Performance awards (SES Bonuses) are paid to members of the Senior Executive Service based on high level performance during the annual performance appraisal cycle. (See Appendix C.)

.04 Performance Recognition for the Senior Foreign Service. There are two forms of performance recognition for members of the Senior Foreign Service: (1) Performance pay (including Presidential Awards of performance pay for Distinguished or Meritorious Service); and (2) Executive Schedule pay adjustments. (See Appendix D.)

.05 Superior Accomplishment Awards These awards recognize the following one-time contributions: special acts or services, suggestions, or inventions. (See Appendix E.)

.06 Presidential Recognition. These awards granted by the President recognize exceptional achievements of unusual benefit to the Nation. Included in this Appendix are the following: President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service; Presidential Management Improvement Awards; Presidential Letters of Commendation; and Presidential Rank Awards for Senior Executives. (See Appendix F.)

.07 Honor Awards. The Gold and Silver Medal Awards are the highest form of honorary recognition that the Department bestows for distinguished and meritorious service. The Bronze Medal Award is the highest form of honorary recognition that a Secretarial Officer or operating **unit** head bestows for superior service. (See Appendix G.)

.08 On-the-Spot Awards. These non-monetary awards recognize accomplishments which represent steps toward achievement of organizational goals or purposes, but for which higher level recognition such as honor awards, performance awards, or superior accomplishment awards are not appropriate. (See Appendix H.)

.09 Special Recognition. These awards include career service recognition, unique Departmental or operating **unit** awards, external awards, productivity-based award systems, and several other types of awards. (See Appendix I.)

.10 Recognition Certificates. Standard certificates are available for recognizing particular

contributions. These are the only types of recognition certificates an operating **unit** may use. { See Appendix J.)

SECTION 5. ELIGIBILITY FOR RECOGNITION.

Employees of the Department {and in some cases, private citizens and employees of other agencies) are eligible for recognition as provided in the chart displayed in Exhibit 3. Awards may be granted to former employees or to their legal heirs or estates if the contribution recognized by the award was made during their employment with the Department.

SECTION 6. PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES.

.01 Supervisors/Managers. Supervisors and managers have the major responsibility for assuring the effective use of incentive awards and preserving the program's credibility. Effective use means:

- a. Encouraging better performance and employee ideas for improvement;
- b. Rewarding superior achievements promptly;
- c. Being fair and objective in granting awards;
- d. Publicizing what awards are granted, to whom, and why; and
- e. Considering wider application of contributions.

.02 Assistant Secretary for Administration. The Assistant Secretary for Administration is responsible for Department-wide administration of the Incentive Awards Program.

.03 Department Office of Personnel. The Director for Personnel and Civil Rights is responsible for giving central direction to and coordinating the Incentive Awards Program. Specifically, the Director is responsible for:

- a. Developing and promulgating the Department's policies and procedures;
- b. Developing training courses for managers and supervisors on effective and proper use of incentives for improving performance;
- c. Obtaining required higher-level concurrence and approval of major awards that require Departmental action;
- d. Approving the purpose, form, criteria, selection method, and manner of presentation of all special recognition programs as defined in Appendix I, .04 and .05 (including any changes made in existing special awards programs);
- e. Providing Department-wide promotion and publicity of recognition programs and award recipients;
- f. Evaluating program results to assure incentives are granted equitably on the basis of merit and performance and providing feedback to managers, supervisors, and employees;
- g. Designating a Departmental Incentive Awards Officer to serve as technical advisor to operating **units** on incentive award matters and to serve as Executive Secretary to the Department's Incentive Awards Board; and
- h. Transmitting the following for approval through the Secretary of Commerce to the Office of Personnel Management:
 1. Award recommendations over \$10,000;
 2. Recommendations for Presidential awards;
 3. Changes to the Department's Incentive Awards Program which modify any element of the Commerce system included in OPM's Performance Management Plan Checklist;
 4. An annual report on incentive awards program activities for the past fiscal year and a statement of major program goals, objectives, and resources for the next year; and
 5. The Department's annual SES performance award distribution.
- i. Serving as permanent chairperson of the Department's Incentive Awards Board.

.04 Operating **Unit** Personnel Officers. Personnel Officers, under the technical guidance of the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights, are responsible for planning, coordinating, and administering the Incentive Awards Program for their respective operating **unit**(s). Each personnel officer must designate an Incentive Awards Program Officer or Coordinator to implement incentive awards activities within guidelines established by the Department.

.05 Regional Administrative Support Center Personnel Officers. The Personnel Officer for each Center designates an Incentive Awards Program Coordinator to coordinate procedural and other requirements with operating **units** for whom the Center provides personnel services. .06 Awards Boards and Committees.

a. Department's Incentive Awards Board (DIAB). The Department's Incentive Awards Board consists of seven members. Board members are appointed by the Assistant Secretary for Administration and are normally at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level or equivalent. The Director for Personnel and Civil Rights serves as the Board's permanent chairperson.

1. The Board reviews and recommends action to the Secretary, or appropriate approving authority, on award nominations in the following categories:

(a) Gold and Silver Medal Awards;

(b) Cash awards over \$5,000 for superior accomplishments for individuals or groups of general workforce, PMRS, or Foreign Service employees (except members of the Senior Foreign Service), or NOAA Corps Officers;

(c) Cash awards over \$5,000 for performance for general workforce employees, Foreign Service Nationals, or NOAA Corps Officers;

(d) Presidential recognition (excluding Senior Executive Rank Awards and Presidential Awards for members of the Senior Foreign Service);

(e) Awards sponsored by outside organizations; and

(f) Any other award requiring Departmental approval.

2. The Board also reviews the purpose, criteria, and form (or changes) of all awards granted by the Department or operating **units**. The Board acts as an advisory body on incentive awards policies and procedures, when requested, and considers specific actions at the request of the Secretary.

b. Departmental Executive Resources Board (ERB). The Departmental Executive Resources Board recommends action to the Secretary on any requests for recognition of Senior Executive Service (SES) employees for Presidential Rank Awards, performance awards (bonuses), or incentive awards. The functions of the Executive Resources Board are described in the Executive Personnel and Policy Manual. The ERB also recommends action to the Secretary on nominations for performance awards for PMRS employees for unusually outstanding performance under 5 USC 5406.

c. Departmental Performance Review Board (PRB). The Departmental Performance Review Board provides an objective peer review of the appraisals, ratings, and recommendations prepared by appointing authorities for those members of the SES whom they supervise directly. Appointing authorities who are in the SES also have their performance appraisals and ratings reviewed by this Board. After Departmental PRB review, the Board's recommendations are returned to the appropriate appointing authority for action. The functions of the Departmental Performance Review Board are described in DAO 202-430, Appendix A.

d. Operating **Unit** Incentive Awards Committees. Heads of operating **units** may establish incentive awards committees (or other review bodies) for the sole purpose of reviewing nominations for awards requiring the Department's approval, as described in paragraph a. above. Operating **unit** incentive awards committees or other review bodies serving similar purposes are prohibited from reviewing Quality Step Increases, Meritorious Service Increases, performance awards, superior accomplishment awards of less than \$2, 5,000, and other routine awards if the authority to approve has been redelegated under Section 7.02a. of this Order. Committee review is unnecessarily time-consuming and often delays granting of awards, thus defeating the objective of reinforcing desired performance through recognition.

e. Operating **Unit** Performance Review Boards PRB's. Operating **Unit** Performance Review Boards

review the performance appraisals of Senior Executive Service employees and recommend to the appointing authority which Senior Executives should receive performance awards (bonuses). These boards may also make or concur with recommendations on performance award (bonus) amounts to be paid to individual career executives, retention considerations, performance-related pay adjustments, and incentive awards. Guidelines on PRB functions are contained in Appendix A to DAO 202-430.

f. Selection Boards, Foreign Service. Selection Boards review the performance of Foreign Service Americans according to formal precepts. The Boards rank Foreign Service Americans and recommend promotions, sustained superior performance awards, meritorious service increases, Presidential Awards and executive service level adjustments for the Senior Foreign Service, or other personnel actions.

g. NOAA Corps Officer Personnel Board. The Officer Personnel Board recommends changes in the lineal list of NOAA Corps Officers and selects and recommends NOAA Corps Officers for promotions, separations, and retirements. The NOAA Corps Awards Board makes recommendations on honorary awards for NOAA Corps Officers. Further guidance is contained in Title 33 of the **United States** Code, Section 853r.

SECTION 7. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY.

.01 Delegation.

a. The following officials of the Department are delegated the authorities described in paragraph b. of this section:

General Counsel

Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere (Administrator)

Under Secretary for Economic Affairs

Under Secretary for International Trade

Under Secretary for Travel and Tourism

Under Secretary for Technology

Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs

Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information

Assistant Secretary and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Inspector General

Assistant Secretary for Economic Development

Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology

Director, Bureau of the Census

Director, Minority Business Development Agency

b. The following authorities are delegated:

1. To grant cash awards for superior accomplishments to general workforce, Foreign Service (except Senior Foreign Service) employees, and to NOAA Corps Officers in amounts not to exceed \$5,000;

2. To grant cash awards for superior accomplishments to PMRS employees (subject to the technical review and concurrence of the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights) in amounts not to exceed \$5,000;

3. To grant cash awards for performance to general workforce employees and Foreign Service Nationals and to NOAA Corps Officers in amounts not to exceed \$5,000;

4. To select awards payout ratios, to approve ratings, and to decide whether to grant performance awards under the Performance Management and Recognition System to employees who are rated Fully Successful with summary rating scores of 350 points or more as specified in Section 8 of Appendix B to DAO 202-430;

5. To grant Quality Step Increases to General Schedule employees and Meritorious Service Increases to Foreign Service employees (except Senior Foreign Service employees);

6. To grant Bronze Medal Awards;

7. To recommend establishment of and grant special operating **unit** awards in accordance with provisions of this Order;
8. To recommend individuals or groups of general workforce or Foreign Service (except Senior Foreign Service) employees or NOAA Corps Officers to the Secretary for cash awards over \$5,000 for superior accomplishments;
9. To recommend general workforce employees, Foreign Service Nationals or NOAA Corps Officers to the Department's Incentive Awards Board for cash awards over \$5,000 for performance and superior accomplishments;
10. To recommend PMRS employees to the Secretary for performance awards for unusually outstanding performance under 5 USC 5406;
11. To recommend individuals, organizations or groups to the Secretary for Presidential, Departmental, and external honor awards;
12. To grant length-of-service recognition to employees for completion of 10 years of service and for subsequent 10-year intervals; and
13. To recommend Senior Executives for Presidential Rank Awards for Distinguished or Meritorious Service, performance awards, or incentive awards.
14. To recommend members of the Senior Foreign Service for incentive awards other than performance pay or Presidential Awards.

.02 Redelegation.

- a. The officials specified in paragraph 7.01a. may further delegate the following authorities:
 1. To approve Quality Step Increases and Meritorious Service Increases;
 2. To approve cash awards for superior accomplishments for PMRS employees in amounts up to \$2,500 (subject to the technical review and concurrence of the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights);
 3. To approve cash awards for superior accomplishments for general workforce and Foreign Service (except Senior Foreign Service) employees, and for NOAA Corps Officers in amounts up to \$2,500;
 4. To approve cash awards for performance for general workforce employees and Foreign Service Nationals, and for NOAA Corps Officers in amounts up to \$2,500;
 5. To grant length-of-service recognition to employees for completion of 10 years of service and for subsequent 10-year intervals;
 6. To select awards payout ratios, to approve ratings, and to decide whether to grant performance awards under the Performance Management and Recognition System to employees who are rated Fully Successful with summary rating scores of 350 points or more as specified in Section 8 of Appendix B to DAO 202-430 (may be redelegated only to PMRS pool managers).
- b. All redelegations of authority under this Order to a lower management level must be made in writing. The Director for Personnel and Civil Rights must be notified in writing by the Program Secretarial Officer or equivalent before any redelegation is made.

.03 Authorities Not Delegated. The Secretary retains authority to:

- a. Grant cash awards for superior accomplishments to general workforce, Foreign Service (except Senior Foreign Service) and PMRS employees, and to NOAA Corps Officers for amounts above \$5,000 and up to \$10,000;
- b. Grant cash awards for performance to general workforce employees, Foreign Service Nationals and NOAA Corps Officers for amounts above \$5,000 and up to \$10,000;
- c. Grant performance awards (bonuses) or incentive awards to employees in the Senior Executive Service;
- d. Grant pay rate adjustments, performance pay or incentive awards for members of the Senior Foreign Service and refer nominations for Presidential Awards to the State Department's Inter-agency Selection Board;
- e. Grant performance awards to PMRS employees for unusually outstanding performance under 5 USC 5406;
- f. Grant cash awards based on performance and superior accomplishments in excess of \$10,000

with prior approval of the Office of Personnel Management;

- g. Approve nominations of employees for Presidential award programs;
- h. Nominate Senior Executives for Presidential Rank Awards for Distinguished and Meritorious Service or other Presidential awards;
- i. Grant the Department's Honor Awards (Gold and Silver Medal Awards) ;
- j. Grant the Secretary of Commerce Special Medal; and
- k. Approve awards sponsored by outside organizations (or to designate an appropriate Departmental official).

SECTION 8. PAYMENTS TO AWARD RECIPIENTS.

.01 Expenses. Travel and per diem expenses may be provided to a Departmental award recipient to participate in an awards ceremony held in his/her honor. Travel and transportation expenses may be paid for one member of an award recipient's family to attend the ceremony. If a handicapped employee selected for an award is unable to travel unattended because of the handicap, travel expenses for an attendant may be paid by the employing agency. These expenses may be paid from funds or appropriations available to the recipient's organization, the organization benefiting from the contribution, or from various other funds as determined by the head of the operating **unit**.

.02 Conditions of Payment. When an award is granted, the acceptance of the award constitutes an agreement that the use by the Government of an idea, method, or device for which the award is made does not form the basis of a further claim of any nature against the Government by the employee or his/her heirs or assigns.

SECTION 9. REPORTS AND RECORDS.

.01 Annual Report. Each operating **unit** must submit to the Director of Personnel by October 15 of each year, a report on program activities for the past fiscal year and a statement of program goals, objectives, and resources, and the amount budgeted for superior accomplishment awards for the next year.

.02 Records.

- a. When the form SF-50 is required for an award, Quality Step Increase or Meritorious Service Increase, it must be filed in the recipient's Official Personnel Folder. Other documentation (i.e., performance appraisals and, if applicable, a narrative statement describing the impact of the contribution, including an estimate of tangible and intangible benefits) should be filed in the recipient's Official Personnel Folder on the left (temporary) side.
- b. Incentive Awards Program records must be kept for three years in a manner which facilitates efficient reviews, audits, and evaluations of the program.
- c. A record of all awards granted for a single invention in the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Federal Inventors Awards Program (DAO 202-452), must be maintained by NTIS and made available to the Department upon request.
- d. Records must be kept on the total number of cash awards granted for each suggestion which was also submitted as an invention to assure that employees do not receive dual compensation for the same contribution.

SECTION 10. EXCEPTIONS.

Within the limits of administrative discretion permitted to the Department, exceptions to the provisions of this Order may be granted from time to time in unusual cases by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights whenever the facts indicate that such an exception will promote the objectives of the Incentive Awards Program. Each request for an exception must be submitted in

writing through the head of the operating **unit** or appropriate Program Secretarial Officer or equivalent and must contain a full justification for the request.

SECTION 11. EFFECT ON OTHER ORDERS.

.01 This Order supersedes DAO 202-450 (Establishment of Awards and Service Certificates) dated September 9, 1975; DAO 202-451 (Incentive Awards Program), dated November 3, 1978, as amended.

.02 This Order also supersedes all operating **unit** or regional directives prescribing policy for the Incentive Awards Program.

Signed - Acting Director for Personnel and Civil Rights

Approved: Assistant Secretary for Administration

Office of Primary Interest
Office of Personnel

APPENDIX A

PERFORMANCE-BASED RECOGNITION FOR GENERAL WORKFORCE AND FOREIGN SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND NOAA CORPS OFFICERS

A. COVERAGE.

This Appendix applies to employees who are covered by the General Workforce and Foreign Service Appraisal Systems (except members of the Senior Foreign Service), and to NOAA Corps Officers. There are two forms of recognition for high level performance by these employees: Performance Awards and Quality Step Increases (QSIs) or Meritorious Service Increases (MSIs). A performance award is a performance-based cash payment to an employee based on the employee's rating of record. A performance award does not increase base pay. A QSI or MSI is an increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the grade of his or her position to the next higher step of the grade. A performance award, QSI, or MSI is granted to an employee based on his or her rating of record for the current appraisal period.

B. PERFORMANCE AWARDS.

.01 Eligibility.

a. To qualify for a performance award, an employee must occupy a position which is covered by the General Workforce Performance Appraisal System or the appraisal systems which cover Foreign Service Americans and Nationals or NOAA Corps Officers on the last day of the annual appraisal cycle for which performance awards are being granted, and:

1. Except for Foreign Service employees and NOAA Corps members, have received a rating of record of at least Fully Successful with a summary rating score of 350 points or more, and every critical element rated at least Fully Successful;
2. If a Foreign Service American, be recommended by a US&FCS Selection Board based on his or her individual ranking;
3. If a Foreign Service National, have an overall performance rating of at least Fully Successful and a minimum rating of Fully Successful on all seven performance factors, and in addition have at least 70% of performance factors rated as Commendable; or
4. If a NOAA Corps Officer, have an overall performance rating of Outstanding or Excellent in at least seven of the ten evaluation areas and an overall rating score of 80 points.

b. Except for Foreign Service American employees, when an employee receives a temporary promotion during the appraisal cycle, that employee may receive an award based on the portion of the appraisal period in which the employee was not serving at the higher grade level as long as the employee has served in the lower graded position for at least 120 days of the appraisal cycle. In such cases, the award amount must be prorated in accordance with Section B.O4a. of this Appendix.

c. When an employee (other than a Foreign Service American) changes positions within the last 120 days of the appraisal period, the employee may receive an award based on his or her interim rating (which becomes the rating of record at the end of the appraisal period) for the position held immediately before the change in positions. For example, if the employee changes positions three months before the end of the appraisal period, the award is based on the nine months of the appraisal period preceding the change in position.

.02 Approval.

a. Each operating **unit** must specify the delegations of authority for approval of performance awards. The official authorized to approve a performance award must be at the same or higher organizational level than the approving official for the performance appraisal.

b. Performance awards must be approved by the operating **unit** official who is responsible for administering the performance awards budget.

.03 Timing of Awards.

a. Approved nominations for performance awards for general workforce employees and NOAA Corps Officers must be submitted to the servicing personnel office within 90 days of the end of the performance appraisal cycle.

b. Foreign Service Americans are recommended for performance awards by the Selection Board at its annual meeting.

c. Approved nominations for performance awards for Foreign Service Nationals must be submitted to the servicing personnel office within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year.

.04 Determining Award Amounts. Performance award amounts are linked directly to the summary rating score on the employee's rating of record and are calculated as a percentage of base pay.

a. The qualifying performance rating scores and award ranges for full-time employees (except for Foreign Service American employees, Foreign Service Nationals, and NOAA Corps members) for a full performance appraisal cycle are as follows:

Qualifying Summary		Award Ranges
Rating Score	Rating	(Percent of Base Pay)
350-379	Fully Successful	up to 3%
380-459	Commendable	up to 6%
460-500	Outstanding	up to 10%

- b. The eligibility of Foreign Service American employees for performance awards is determined by their ranking by the Selection Board. All employees rated eligible for performance awards by the Selection Board may receive an award of up to three percent of base salary. Sixty percent of the eligible employees in each class may receive awards up to six percent of base salary. Twenty percent of all eligible employees in each class may receive awards up to ten percent of base salary. A lower ranking employee may not be awarded a higher percentage of base pay than a higher ranking employee in the same class. The total amount of money awarded for performance awards in each class may not exceed the product of the total base pay of all members of the class and a percentage determined annually by the Secretary as the maximum payout for Performance Management and Recognition System (PMRS) employees.
- c. The allowed ranges for performance awards for Foreign Service Nationals are:

Percent of Performance Factors Exceeding Normal Requirements	Award Range (Percent of Base Pay)
70- 75%	up to 3%
76- 91%	up to 6%
92- 100%	up to 10%

- d. The allowed ranges for performance awards for NOAA Corps Officers are:

Rating Score (Evaluation Areas)	Award Range (Percent of Base Pay)
80- 89	up to 3%
90- 95	up to 6%
96- 100	up to 10%

- e. When determining performance award amounts, management officials must consider the value of any superior accomplishment awards granted during the appraisal period that are related to the employee's job responsibilities. The total monetary recognition given must be proportionate to the employee's contributions and may not exceed the percentages listed in B.04a. above.
- f. If a performance award is based on a period of less than a full appraisal cycle, then the award ranges must be reduced in proportion to the length of the appraisal period.
- g. For employees under a prevailing rate pay schedule, base pay means the current hourly rate

multiplied by 2,087.

h. For part-time employees, the award ranges must be reduced in proportion to the employee's scheduled biweekly work hours compared to 80 hours.

i. For intermittent employees, the award ranges above must be reduced in proportion to the number of hours actually worked during the period covered by the award, compared to a full-time work schedule.

j. Performance awards are limited to half of the percentages shown in the scales in Section B.04a. above for employees who receive a permanent promotion during the appraisal cycle on which the award is based.

C. QUALITY STEP INCREASES (QSIs) OR MERITORIOUS SERVICE INCREASES (MSIs).

A QSI or MSI may be granted in addition to a regular within-grade or class increase if the employee meets the eligibility criteria in .01a. of this section. QSIs may be granted to General Schedule employees and MSIs to Foreign Service employees to recognize high-quality performance. A QSI or MSI is not automatically granted when an Outstanding rating is given.

.01 Eligibility.

a. To qualify, a general workforce employee or Foreign Service National must:

1. Have received a performance rating of record of Outstanding (general workforce employees) or have a current overall performance rating of Outstanding (Foreign Service Nationals) for the current appraisal cycle;
 2. Have held the same grade and type of position (or similar position) in a pay status for at least six-months before the end of the appraisal cycle;
 3. Be expected to continue at the same high level of performance and in the same grade and type of position for at least 60 days after the effective date of the increase;
 4. Not have been on a detail or temporarily promoted to another position during the last six months of the appraisal period, unless detailed to the same grade and type of position;
 5. Not have a promotion in progress or anticipated within 60 days after the effective date of the increase;
 6. Not have received a QSI or MSI within 52 consecutive calendar weeks preceding the effective date of the increase; and
 7. Not be at the top step of his or her pay range.
- b. Foreign Service Americans are recommended for MSI's by the Selection Boards and must meet the criteria in items 6. and 7. of Section C.01a. above.

.02 Multiple QSI's.

a. When an employee has received a QSI based on performance during the previous appraisal period, and is being recommended for another QSI for the current appraisal period, the following applies:

1. The employee must have demonstrated current performance that is at a significantly higher level than the performance which warranted the previous QSI;
 2. The Personnel Officer must review the QSI and forward it to the head of the operating **unit** with a recommendation for approval or disapproval. The recommendation must address whether the current performance is at a significantly higher level than the performance which warranted the previous QSI; and
 3. The QSI must be personally approved by the head of the operating **unit**.
- b. If an employee receives more than two QSI's in a four-year period, the recommendation for each QSI beyond two must be submitted to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights for approval.
- c. The granting of multiple QSI's should be considered atypical, occurring only in rare circumstances.

.03 Approval. MSI's for Foreign Service Nationals are approved by the Senior Commercial Officer at Post upon recommendation by the Inter-agency Awards Committee.

.04 Timing.

- a. Nominations for QSI's must be submitted to the servicing personnel office within 90 days after the end of the performance appraisal annual cycle (March 31 or September 30) .
- b. Nominations for MSI's for Foreign Service Nationals must be submitted to the servicing personnel office within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.

D. LIMITATION.

Except in unusual circumstances where an employee's performance is exceptionally outstanding or is an exceptionally important contribution to mission or national goals, an employee may not receive a QSI or MSI and a performance award, both of which recognize the same performance during an appraisal period. The situations are considered so rare that a written justification must be sent to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights for prior approval. The combined value of the QSI or MSI amount (computed on an annual basis) and the performance award amount together must not exceed ten percent of the employee's annual salary.

E. PROCESS.

.01 After review of the employee's performance, the supervisor may initiate a recommendation for a performance award or QSI/MSI by completing the performance recognition section of CD-396, "Performance Management Record." The approved performance appraisal document is the sole written justification for a performance award or QSI/MSI (except for a Foreign Service American).

.02 Recommending officials must send the CD-396 to the servicing personnel office within 90 days after the annual appraisal cycle. Award nominations for Foreign Service Nationals who are on an anniversary date appraisal cycle must be sent to the servicing personnel office within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.

.03 The appropriate Incentive Awards Program Officer or designee reviews the award nomination for conformity to eligibility criteria and, if it meets all technical requirements, certifies it and forwards it to the payroll office for payment.

.04 The performance award or QSI/MSI becomes effective on the first day of the first pay period on or after approval by the appropriate management official and certification by the personnel office. QSI's may not be retroactive except to correct an administrative error that occurred after approval of the award.

APPENDIX B

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION SYSTEM (PMRS) PERFORMANCE AWARDS

A. DESCRIPTION.

PMRS performance awards are lump-sum cash awards linked directly to the summary performance ratings assigned to employees under the Department's performance appraisal system prescribed by DAO 202-430, Performance Appraisal.

B. ELIGIBILITY.

.01 The following are eligible for PMRS performance awards:

- a. PMRS employees receiving a summary performance rating of Outstanding, Commendable, or Fully Successful with a summary rating score of at least 350 points for the most recently completed performance appraisal cycle;
- b. PMRS employees unratable on the basis of the most recently completed performance appraisal cycle (see Section 8.04g. of Appendix B, DAO 202-430) who have PMRS summary performance ratings of Outstanding, Commendable, or Fully Successful (with at least 350 points) that are

extended from the immediately preceding appraisal cycle;

c. Any PMRS employee who has transferred from a PMRS position in another Federal agency during the last 120 days of the appraisal cycle and who has a summary performance rating of record or interim rating of Outstanding or Commendable from his or her former agency.

.02 The following are not eligible for PMRS performance awards:

- a. Employees not covered by PMRS on the last workday of the performance appraisal cycle;
- b. Any PMRS employee whose rating of record is Marginal or Unsatisfactory;
- c. Employees newly appointed to the Federal government (as specified in 5 CFR 540.107d.) who occupied PMRS positions for less than 120 days during the most recently completed appraisal cycle;
- d. Unrateable PMRS employees who do not have a PMRS summary performance rating from the immediately preceding appraisal cycle that may be extended and used as a basis for the award;
- e. PMRS employees not in a pay status for at least 120 days during the most recently completed appraisal cycle;
- f. Any PMRS employee who has transferred from a PMRS position in another Federal agency during the last 120 days of the appraisal cycle and who has already received a PMRS performance award for that fiscal year's appraisal cycle from his or her former agency.

.03 The following limitations apply:

- a. All eligible employees rated outstanding or Commendable share in performance awards determined collectively as provided in Section 8. of the PMRS system document. Organizational pool managers determine if employees in their pools who are rated Fully Successful with summary rating scores of 350 or more points receive performance awards.
- b. PMRS employees rated outstanding with summary rating scores of 475 points or more may receive performance awards beyond the amounts set collectively for the pool. Up to 3 percent of each operating **unit's** PMRS population may be nominated for this additional recognition.
- c. The PMRS performance award is the primary award granted to PMRS employees for accomplishments covered by their performance plans or position descriptions. However, under certain circumstances, PMRS employees may also be considered for superior accomplishment awards for non-recurring accomplishments that are job-related, subject to the technical review and concurrence of the Director for Personnel and civil Rights (see Appendix E).

c. DETERMINING AWARD AMOUNTS.

.01 As provided for in Section 8 of the PMRS system document, the amounts of performance awards of up to 10% of base pay are set collectively for all eligible PMRS employees. Within each pool, award amounts are proportionately greater for Outstanding employees than Commendable employees, which in turn are greater than those for Fully Successful employees, according to ratios predetermined by pool managers within limits set by the Department. The maximum payout for the Department is 1.5 percent of the expected aggregate payroll for the following year for the PMRS employee population.

.02 PMRS employees rated Outstanding must receive a performance award of at least two percent of their pre-merit increase salary.

.03 The minimum performance award granted to employees rated Commendable or Fully Successful is \$250. If the amount computed for an employee of an organizational pool is less than \$250 because of the rating distribution or other factors, no award is granted.

.04 Employees with Outstanding ratings and summary rating scores of at least 475 who are nominated for awards greater than the amounts collectively set may receive awards of up to 20 percent of their pre-merit increase salary. The awards must be individually justified and approved as described in paragraph D. below.

D. PROCEDURES.

.01 Before the end of the annual performance appraisal period, the Office of Personnel issues guidelines on the distribution of PMRS performance awards.

.02 After performance ratings have been approved, operating **units** must submit the following to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights according to a schedule set by the Office of Personnel each year:

- a. An approved listing of each pool's employees, their current ratings, and pre- and post-merit increase salaries;
- b. Nomination packages for performance awards ranging up to 20 percent of base pay (awards in excess of the amounts collectively set) for Outstanding employees with summary rating scores of 475 or more points. Instructions for preparing nomination packages are issued each year by the Office of Personnel.

.03 The Office of Personnel reviews all nominations for compliance with regulations and Departmental policy. Nominations are then reviewed by the Departmental Executive Resources Board which develops final recommendations for the Secretary's consideration. Only the Secretary or his designee may approve performance awards greater than the amounts collectively set ranging up to 20 percent of base pay. The Secretary's decisions are conveyed to operating **units** by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights, who asks pool managers (or appointing authorities) to:

- a. Select an award payout ratio of 2:1, 2.5:1, or 3:1. A 2:1 award ratio would provide Outstanding employees with awards twice those of Commendable employees, and four times those of eligible Fully Successful employees; and
- b. Decide whether to grant performance awards to employees rated Fully Successful with summary scores of 350 or more points. Once these decisions have been made, the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights issues performance award tables to servicing personnel offices. Awards processing may not begin until these tables are issued.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION SYSTEM (PMRS)

PERFORMANCE AWARDS

A. DESCRIPTION.

PMRS performance awards are lump-sum cash awards linked directly to the summary performance ratings assigned to employees under the Department's performance appraisal system prescribed by DAO 202-430, Performance Appraisal.

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.01 The following are eligible for PMRS performance awards:

- a. PMRS employees receiving a summary performance rating of Outstanding, Commendable, or Fully Successful with a summary rating score of at least 350 points for the most recently completed performance appraisal cycle;

b. PMRS employees unratable on the basis of the most recently completed performance appraisal cycle (see Section 8.04g. of Appendix B, DAO 202-430) who have PMRS summary performance ratings of Outstanding, Commendable, or Fully Successful (with at least 350 points) that are extended from the immediately preceding appraisal cycle;

c. Any PMRS employee who has transferred from a PMRS position in another Federal agency during the last 120 days of the appraisal cycle and who has a summary performance rating of record or interim rating of Outstanding or Commendable from his or her former agency.

.02 The following are not eligible for PMRS performance awards:

a. Employees not covered by PMRS on the last workday of the performance appraisal cycle;

b. Any PMRS employee whose rating of record is Marginal or Unsatisfactory;

c. Employees newly appointed to the Federal government (as specified in 5 CFR 540.107d.) who occupied PMRS positions for less than 120 days during the most recently completed appraisal cycle;

d. Unrateable PMRS employees who do not have a PMRS summary performance rating from the immediately preceding appraisal cycle that may be extended and used as a basis for the award;

e. PMRS employees not in a pay status for at least 120 days during the most recently completed appraisal cycle;

f. Any PMRS employee who has transferred from a PMRS position in another Federal agency during the last 120 days of the appraisal cycle and who has already received a PMRS performance award for that fiscal year's appraisal cycle from his or her former agency.

.03 The following limitations apply:

a. All eligible employees rated Outstanding or Commendable share in performance awards determined collectively as provided in Section 8. of the PMRS system document. Organizational pool managers determine if employees in their pools who are rated Fully Successful with summary rating scores of 350 or more points receive performance awards.

b. PMRS employees rated Outstanding with summary rating scores of 475 points or more may receive performance awards beyond the amounts set collectively for the pool. Up to 3 percent of each operating **unit's** PMRS population may be nominated for this additional recognition.

c. The PMRS performance award is the primary award granted to PMRS employees for accomplishments covered by their performance plans or position descriptions. However, under certain circumstances, PMRS employees may also be considered for superior accomplishment awards for non-recurring accomplishments that are job-related, subject to the technical review and concurrence of the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights (see Appendix E).

C. DETERMINING AWARD AMOUNTS.

.01 As provided for in Section 8 of the PMRS system document, the amounts of performance awards of up to 10% of base pay are set collectively for all eligible PMRS employees. Within each pool,

award amounts are proportionately greater for Outstanding employees than Commendable employees, which in turn are greater than those for Fully Successful employees, according to ratios predetermined by pool managers within limits set by the Department. The maximum payout for the Department is 1.5 percent of the expected aggregate payroll for the following year for the PMRS employee population.

.02 PMRS employees rated Outstanding must receive a performance award of at least two percent of their pre-merit increase salary.

.03 The minimum performance award granted to employees rated Commendable or Fully Successful is \$250 because of the rating distribution or other factors, no award is granted.

.04 Employees with Outstanding ratings and summary rating scores of at least 475 who are nominated for awards greater than the amount collectively set may receive awards of up to 20 percent of their pre-merit increase salary. The awards must be individually justified and approved as described in paragraph D. below.

D. PROCEDURES.

.01 Before the end of the annual performance appraisal period, the Office of Personnel issues guidelines on the distribution of PMRS performance awards.

.02 After performance ratings have been approved, operating **units** must submit the following to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights according to a schedule set by the Office of Personnel each year:

a. An approved listing of each pool's employees, their current ratings, and pre-and post-merit increase salaries.

b. Nomination packages for performance awards ranging up to 20 percent of base pay (awards in excess of the amounts collectively set) for Outstanding employees with summary rating scores of 475 or more points. Instructions for preparing nomination packages are issued each year by the Office of Personnel.

.03 The Office of Personnel reviews all nominations for compliance with regulations and Departmental policy. Nominations are then reviewed by the Departmental Executive Resources Board which develops final recommendations for the Secretary's consideration. Only the Secretary or his designee may approve performance awards greater than the amounts collectively set ranging up to 20 percent of base pay. The Secretary's decisions are conveyed to operating **units** by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights, who asks pool managers (or appointing authorities) to:

a. Select an award payout ratio of 2:1, 2.5:1, or 3:1. A 2:1 award ratio would provide Outstanding employees with awards twice those of Commendable employees, and four times those of eligible Fully Successful employees; and

b. Decide whether to grant performance awards to employees rated Fully Successful with summary scores of 350 or more points. Once these decisions have been made, the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights issues performance award tables to servicing personnel offices. Awards processing may not begin until these tables are issued.

APPENDIX C

PERFORMANCE BONUSES FOR THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

A. DESCRIPTION.

Performance awards, more commonly referred to as bonuses, are lump-sum cash payments to recognize career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) for excellence in performance during a performance appraisal cycle. Bonus amounts are specified as a percentage of the recipient's payable base salary and are governed by 5 U.S.C. 5384.

The Office of Personnel Management issues guidance each fiscal year on the distribution of performance bonuses and reviews their distribution after payment. The Secretary awards all SES bonuses and assigns dollar amounts based on recommendations furnished by the Departmental Executive Resources Board.

.01 Eligibility Criteria. To be eligible for a performance bonus, an employee must:

- a. Be a career senior executive;
- b. Be covered by a valid performance plan; and
- c. Have a Fully Successful rating or higher on his/her SES performance appraisal rating of record for the current appraisal period.

.02 Additional Guidance. Before the end of the annual SES performance appraisal cycle, the Department provides appointing authorities with bonus allocation guidelines, a timetable of critical dates, and the process for submitting bonus recommendations. The Departmental Executive Resources Board may specify additional eligibility requirements for a performance bonus.

.03 Determining Award Amounts. The total amount of performance bonuses may not exceed three percent of the aggregate payroll for all SES career appointees within the Department at the end of that fiscal year. The minimum award is five percent of the senior executive's annual salary, and the maximum award is 20 percent.

B. PROCESS.

.01 On the basis of SES performance plans and appraisals, each operating **unit** Performance Review Board (PRB) prepares a listing of proposed bonus recipients and recommended bonus amounts and submits it to the appropriate appointing authority.

.02 Appointing authorities review PRB recommendations and prepare a priority listing of bonus nominees and recommended amounts for consideration by the Secretary.

.03 In accordance with the Department's timetable and annual instructions, Secretarial Officers (or equivalents) forward the priority listing to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights as Executive Secretary of the Department's Executive Resources Board.

.04 The Departmental Executive Resources Board (ERB) reviews each submission for adherence to legal and regulatory requirements and for compliance with Departmental policy. It then makes recommendations to the Secretary on each proposal.

.05 The Secretary makes decisions on bonuses as indicated in the timetable.

APPENDIX D

PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION FOR MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE

A. DESCRIPTION.

Members of the Senior Foreign service may be granted recognition for high level performance in the

following ways: Performance Pay, including Presidential Awards; and Executive Schedule pay adjustments.

.01 Performance Pay.

- a. Performance pay is awarded to career members of the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) for excellence in performance during a performance appraisal cycle, and is given as a lump sum. Performance pay decisions take into account the criteria established by OPM for performance awards for the Senior Executive Service (5 U.S.C. 5384) and Presidential Rank Awards (5 U.S.C. 4502). The Secretary awards performance pay to members of the Senior Foreign Service based on recommendations furnished by the US&FCS Senior Selection Board.
- b. Nominations for Presidential Awards of performance pay are made by the Secretary of Commerce to the Department of State's Inter-agency Selection Board. Presidential Awards are granted for sustained extraordinary accomplishment as follows: The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) includes a lump-sum payment of \$20,000; the Meritorious Service Award (MSA) includes lump-sum payment of \$10,000.

.02 Executive Schedule Pay Adjustments. Basic salary rates for members of the Senior Foreign Service are adjusted in the same manner as rates of basic pay are adjusted for the Senior Executive Service. Pay rate adjustments are based on the recommendations and rankings of the US&FCS Senior Selection Board.

B. PERFORMANCE PAY.

.01 Eligibility.

- a. To be eligible for performance pay, an SFS member must be serving under:
 1. A career or career candidate appointment; or
 2. A limited appointment with reemployment rights as a career appointee in the Senior Executive Service.
- b. Performance pay may be granted to no more than 50% of SFS members.
- c. Presidential Awards may be conferred on no more than 6% of SFS members.

.02 Determining Award Amount.

- a. The total amount of performance pay (excluding Presidential Awards) may not exceed three percent of the aggregate payroll for all eligible SFS members within the Department at the end of that fiscal year.
- b. The minimum amount of performance pay granted is 5% of the SFS member's payable annual base salary; the maximum amount granted is 20% of the recipient's payable annual base salary, except in the case of Presidential Awards for Distinguished and Meritorious Service.

C. EXECUTIVE SCHEDULE PAY ADJUSTMENTS.

.01 Eligibility. Only Senior Foreign Service members who are Counselors at ES levels FE-OC-I, 2, or 3, or who are Minister-Counselors at ES level FE-MC-4, are eligible for ES level increases.

.02 The following are the minimum criteria required for an ES level increase:

- a. Summary performance ratings of at least Commendable for the past two years; and
- b. A current summary rating of outstanding or a current performance appraisal with no element rated less than 4 (Commendable).

D. LIMITATION.

An SFS member may not receive more than one of the following in the same competition year: (1) An award of performance pay by the Secretary of Commerce; (2) a Presidential Award for Distinguished or Meritorious Service; or (3) a pay rate adjustment.

E. PROCESS.

.01 The Senior Selection Board considers the entire record of the members of the Senior Foreign Service and makes recommendations for performance pay and for pay rate adjustments (both upward and downward) based on performance.

.02 The Senior Selection Board submits a report to the Director General of the US&FCS with recommendations for performance pay awards and pay rate adjustments for SFS members.

.03 The Director General reviews the Selection Board's report and determines which recommendations for awards of performance pay and pay rate adjustments are to be forwarded for consideration by the Secretary.

.04 The Secretary makes final decisions on performance pay and pay rate adjustments for individual SFS members, and refers recommendations for Presidential Awards to the State Department's Inter-agency Selection Board for review and submission to the President.

.05 Once the recipients of Presidential Awards have been named by the President, pay rate adjustments are made, and awards are paid to recipients in accordance with the Selection Board's rank order list.

APPENDIX E

SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARDS

A. DEFINITIONS.

.01 "Superior accomplishment award" means a monetary or non-monetary award for a contribution resulting in tangible benefits or savings, or intangible benefits to the Government. There are three types of superior accomplishment awards: special act or service awards, suggestion awards, and invention awards.

.02 "Contribution" means an accomplishment achieved through an individual or group effort in the form of a suggestion, an invention, or a special act or service in the public interest connected with or related to official employment that contributes to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations, or achieves a significant reduction in paperwork.

.03 "Intangible benefits" means benefits to the Government that cannot be measured in terms of dollar savings.

.04 "Non-monetary award" means a medal, certificate, plaque, **citation**, badge, or other similar item that has an award or honor connotation.

.05 "Tangible benefits" means benefits or savings to the Government that can be measured in terms of dollar savings.

B. ELIGIBILITY.

All employees of the Department are eligible for superior accomplishment awards. Individuals and groups may be recognized.

C. POLICY.

.01 A superior accomplishment award may be granted alone or in addition to a performance award

granted under the authority of 5 CFR 430 for general workforce employees or 5 CFR 540 for PMRS employees, or a quality step increase. When an employee's superior accomplishment is related to his or her job responsibilities, management officials must consider other monetary recognition that has been or will be given to the employee for the accomplishment when determining the award amount so that the total monetary recognition given to the employee is proportionate to the employee's contribution.

.02 A superior accomplishment award must not be used as a substitute for other personnel action, or as a substitute for pay.

.03 A superior accomplishment award may not be used to recognize overall employee performance, nor may it be used to recognize outstanding performance on an element of a performance plan unless the accomplishment otherwise meets the criteria in D.01a.

.04 A PMRS employee may be granted a superior accomplishment award for a special act or service only when the accomplishment meets the criteria in D.01a. and also provides such substantial benefits to the government that recognition above a PMRS performance award is warranted.

.05 To be considered as the basis for a superior accomplishment award, a contribution must:

- a. Be made while the contributor is a Federal employee;
- b. Be supported by a written justification separate from the employee's rating of record; and
- c. Be approved at a management level higher than that of the individual who recommended use of the suggestion or invention, or recommended the award.

.06 When a cash award is granted to a group for superior accomplishments, the following provisions apply:

- a. The accomplishment must have substantially exceeded normal expectations for the group as a whole;
- b. All employees to whom the accomplishment or contribution is creditable, including a supervisor, may share in the award;
- c. A cash award may be divided in equal shares or allotted to each member in proportion to his/her share of credit for the contribution;
- d. The total amount of a cash award to a group should be based solely on the value of tangible and intangible benefits accruing from the contribution; the total amount of the award may not exceed the amount that would be authorized if the contribution had been made by one individual, except that in unusual circumstances, a greater amount may be approved by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights;
- e. Any recommendation for a group award totaling more than \$5,000 requires the Department's Incentive Awards Board's review.

.07 Superior accomplishment awards must be documented in the Official Personnel Folder to reflect the nature of the award and the award amount.

.08 Acceptance of a monetary award constitutes an agreement that the use by the Government of the idea, method, or device for which the award is paid does not form the basis of a further claim against the Government.

.09 When contributions result in significant tangible benefits to the operating **unit**, management officials should consider the possibility of wider application of the benefits throughout the Department and the Federal government and coordinate appropriate action with the Incentive Awards Program Officer.

D. TYPES OF SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARDS.

.01 Special Act or Service Award.

a. Criteria. A special act or service is a contribution or accomplishment in the public interest that is:

1. A non-recurring contribution either within or outside of job responsibilities;
2. A scientific achievement;
3. An act of heroism.

b. Eligibility. To be eligible for a special act or service award, an employee must:

1. Make a contribution that meets a criterion under .01a. of this section; and
2. Not have a current rating of record of less than Fully Successful, except that in rare circumstances, an employee with less than a Fully Successful rating may receive an award with the advance written approval of the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights.

c. If an employee who is currently under the PMRS was covered by the General Workforce Performance Appraisal System during the entire recognition period, the special act or service award is processed according to procedures for general workforce employees.

d. Details. Service on a detail does not in itself constitute a non-recurring or one-time contribution that qualifies for a special act or service award. If an employee is detailed for 120 days or more, exemplary performance on the detail will be factored into his/her performance rating. Exemplary performance on a detail of less than 120 days may be recognized with a special act or service award only if the employee's contribution meets the criteria in D.01a.

The job-related contributions of detailees must be considered on the same basis as those of permanent incumbents in determining if they meet the criteria for a special act or service award.

e. Summer Employees. Summer employees (May 13- September 30) who perform beyond expectations or who make superior accomplishments in the Department may be recognized only under this authority. These awards may be processed no earlier than the last pay period of the employee's summer employment. An award may not exceed ten percent of a summer employee's total earnings for that summer, unless there are significant tangible benefits resulting from their contributions which could support a greater amount.

f. Process.

1. The supervisor may initiate a CD-326, "Recommendation for Recognition," as soon as the employee (except for summer employees) makes a worthy contribution. The recommendation must include a description of the accomplishment, its benefits, how it was exceptional, and the amount of any savings to be realized. The award scales in Exhibits 1 and 2 should be used to determine award amounts and the award recommendation should include documentation as to how the amount recommended was determined.

2. The supervisor forwards the award recommendation through organizational channels to the official with approval authority.

3. The Director for Personnel and Civil Rights must approve all special act or service awards for PMRS employees.

(a) The request for approval must include the following: CD-326, "Recommendation for Recognition," the employee's position description, and the latest completed CD-396, "Performance Management Record."

(b) The following factors are taken into account before approval is granted:

- (1) Whether the benefits accruing to the Government from the contribution are so great that a performance award would be insufficient recognition;
- (2) Whether the accomplishment greatly exceeds normal expectations for performance by the employee; and
- (3) Whether the contribution constitutes a significant portion of the employee's performance plan or an element of the plan.

4. A special act or service award for an SES employee must be approved by the Secretary through the same channels as SES performance bonuses.

.02 Suggestion Awards.

a. Description. A suggestion award is granted for an idea that contributes directly to the economy,

efficiency, or effectiveness of operations. The award amount is based on the benefits realized as a result of the implementation of the idea. See DAO 202-454, "Suggestion Program," for a complete description of the program.

b. Criteria. To warrant consideration for an award, a suggestion:

1. Must be processed under the employee suggestion program, except when an idea is implemented outside the Suggestion Program but is deemed worthy of recognition by an award as allowed by DAO 202-454;
2. Must be adopted by an official with authority to adopt it; and
3. Must provide tangible benefits to the Government with a value of at least \$250 or comparable intangible benefits or a combination of tangible and intangible benefits. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.)

c. Process.

1. When the evaluator has decided to adopt a suggestion, he or she works with the Incentive Awards Program Officer to determine the amount of the proposed award using the tangible and/or intangible benefits scales. The signed and dated CD-170, "Official Suggestion Evaluation Form," serves as the documentation for the award.
2. The CD-170 must show the amount of the cash award.
 - (a) In calculating the benefits to the Government of an adopted suggestion, the evaluator should estimate the net benefits (i.e., the total savings minus any implementation costs).
 - (b) Cash awards for adopted suggestions are normally based on the estimated first-year benefits to the Government. If savings extend over more than one year, the award may be based on the average annual savings for a longer period, not exceeding five years.
 - (c) When a suggestion results in both tangible and intangible benefits, the amount of the award warranted by the tangible benefits should be increased to compensate for intangible benefits. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.)
 - (d) A cash award may also be granted if a suggestion is only partially adopted. (See DAO 202-454).
 - (e) Normally when a suggestion falls within the scope of the employee's job responsibilities and within the authority of the employee to approve or adopt it, it is not eligible for consideration under the Suggestion Program. However, in rare cases, a job-related suggestion is made that warrants recognition under the Suggestion Program because the contribution far exceeds the employee's performance standards and has an impact that goes beyond the scope of the employee's normal job responsibilities. In such cases, a suggestion award may be appropriate if the contribution has not been otherwise recognized by a cash award.
3. Award recommendations are forwarded through organizational channels to the approving official. If a proposed suggestion award exceeds \$5,000, the recommendation, evaluation report, and suggestion must be approved by the Department's Incentive Awards Board.
4. Suggestion awards to SES members must be approved by the Secretary through the same channels as performance bonuses.
5. An employee whose idea is implemented and, in retrospect, would merit an award under the Suggestion Program, may request that his/her idea be considered for a suggestion award no later than three months after the idea was first placed into effect.
- d. Suggestion Award Entitlement Period. The suggestion award entitlement period is the two-year period following the date of final action on a suggestion during which the suggester retains the right to be considered (1) for an additional award if additional benefits result after adoption, or (2) for an award if a non-adopted suggestion is implemented within the two-year period.

.03 Invention Awards.

a. Description. An invention award is cash or honorary recognition granted to a Federal employee for an invention which is of interest to the U.S. Government or the public and for which protection by patenting or publication is sought.

b. Amount/Timing.

1. An invention award of at least \$300 is granted when an employee's invention has been favorably searched and a patent application has been filed. In the case of joint inventors, each inventor is nominated for an equal share of the initial award except that the share to each inventor must be no less than \$100.

2. Further awards, up to \$35,000, may be granted (FPM Chapter 451, Subchapter 9) for an invention owned by the U.S. Government whenever the invention benefits the public, as evidenced by the number of patent licenses granted, reports on commercialization from patent licenses, and other information pertaining to the commercial use of the invention; or the invention is used by and benefits the Government.

3. Employees are eligible to receive a cash award in any year that royalty-bearing licenses covering their inventions are in effect (refer to DAO 202-452).

c. Process.

1. After receiving notification of a filed patent application, the Office of General Counsel informs the inventor's organization and recommends that an award recommendation (CD-326) be prepared, and also advises the Incentive Awards Program Officer.

2. The awarding official approves the recommendation. The Incentive Awards Program Officer forwards the award proposal to the payroll office for payment if it conforms with requirements.

3. Invention awards to SES members must be approved by the Secretary through the same channels as performance bonuses.

APPENDIX F

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION

A. DESCRIPTION.

The President may grant a cash award for honorary recognition of an employee who (1) by his or her suggestion, invention, superior accomplishment, or other personal effort contributes to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations, or (2) performs an exceptionally meritorious special act or service in the public interest in connection with or related to his or her official employment. A Presidential award may be in addition to an agency award under 5 U.S.C. 4504 and 5 U.S.C. 5403.

The President may also award to a career appointee in the Senior Executive Service the rank of Meritorious or Distinguished Executive under 5 U.S.C. 4507.

B. TYPES OF PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION.

.01 President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service.

a. Description. This award is the highest honor that the Federal Government can grant to a career employee in recognition of benefits to the Nation. The President may grant as many as five awards each year. An award consists of a certificate, a gold medal, and a rosette.

b. Criteria. This award is granted to a career Federal employee for an outstanding achievement that produces a major improvement in Government operations or serves the public interest. The achievement must be so important that the employee deserves greater recognition than can be granted by the Secretary.

c. Process. The Director of the Office of Personnel Management requests nominations from heads of Federal departments and agencies and issues instructions for submitting award nominations. Nominations are reviewed by the Department's Incentive Awards Board and then submitted to the Secretary for approval. The Secretary's nominations are submitted to the President through the Office of Personnel Management.

.02 Presidential Management Improvement Awards.

a. Description. These awards are presented by the president to a limited number of individuals or small working teams (groups) whose suggestions or special achievements result in tangible benefits to the Government that exceed \$250,000.

b. Criteria. To be nominated, the individual or group must have been recommended for a Presidential Letter of Commendation for their achievements.

c. Process. Nominations are reviewed by the Department's Incentive Awards Board before going to the Secretary for approval. The Secretary submits nominations to the Director, Office of Personnel

Management, for review and presentation to the President.

.03 Presidential Letters of Commendation.

- a. Description. These awards consist of personal letters of commendation from the President.
- b. Criteria. Presidential Letters of Commendation are granted for contributions that are significantly beyond job requirements and produce first year savings of \$10,000 or more. Nominees must first receive recognition from the Department to be eligible for Presidential recognition.
- c. Process. All nominations must be reviewed by the Department's Incentive Awards Board before submission to the Secretary for approval and recommendation to OPM for referral to the President.

.04 Presidential Rank Awards for Senior Executives.

- a. Description. Presidential Rank Awards include stipends, certificates, and pins that are granted annually by the President to a few Senior Executive Service members. The two award types are:
 - 1. Distinguished Executive - Includes a lump-sum payment of \$20,000 for sustained extraordinary accomplishments.
 - 2. Meritorious Executive - Includes a lump-sum payment of \$10,000 for sustained accomplishments.
- b. Eligibility.
 - 1. All SES career appointees are eligible. Performance for which a nomination is submitted must have been sustained for at least three years while in an executive or equivalent position.
 - 2. An individual who receives either the Meritorious or Distinguished Executive Award is not eligible for the same award during the next four fiscal years.
 - 3. An individual who receives payment of an SES bonus is not eligible for a Presidential Rank Award in the same calendar year.
 - 4. Nominees must have been rated Fully Successful or better in each of the preceding three years, preferably with the most recent rating being outstanding.
 - 5. A nominee for Distinguished Rank would typically have received the rank of Meritorious Executive in a prior year; however, the rank of Distinguished Executive may be awarded without previous recognition when only the highest rank can serve as fitting recognition.
- c. Criteria. A nominee must show sustained accomplishments to be a Meritorious Executive. To be a Distinguished Executive the nominee must show sustained extraordinary accomplishment. Criteria upon which nominees are evaluated may include, but need not be limited to, the following (for each criterion offered, specific examples must be cited):
 - 1. Career achievements that are recognized throughout the agency or are acknowledged on a national or international level;
 - 2. Specific achievements of significant cost reduction or cost avoidance enabling the agency to reallocate resources to high priority activities;
 - 3. Successful use of human resources as evidenced through high workforce productivity and/or effective development and recognition of subordinates;
 - 4. Demonstration of personal initiative and innovation;
 - 5. Substantial improvements in quality of work, efficiency, and/or timeliness of service;
 - 6. Unusual levels of cooperative effort with other Federal agencies, government jurisdictions, and/or the private sector.
 - 7. Especially successful efforts in affirmative action; and
 - 8. Major career-related awards and honors received.

In addition to the above criteria, it must be clear that the nominee has demonstrated qualities of strength, leadership, integrity, industry, and personal conduct that have established and maintained a high degree of public confidence and trust. General guidelines which may be helpful in structuring an award nomination are contained in 5 U.S.C. 4313.
- d. Nominating Process.
 - 1. The Department announces the Presidential Rank Award program to appointing authorities who request nominations within their organizations.
 - 2. Operating **unit** Performance Review Boards (PRB's) review nominations and submit them to the appropriate appointing authority, with written recommendations on the approval or disapproval, stating the reasons for their recommendations. A PRB member who has been nominated for a

Presidential Rank Award may not participate in any related rank award deliberations.

3. The appointing authority, after considering the PRB recommendations, submits nominations to the Department in accordance with the timetable and procedures established annually. Nominations for each award category must be submitted in priority order.

e. Submission Requirements. Nominations must be signed by the head of the operating **unit** and the appropriate Secretarial Officer and submitted to the Department according to instructions which are issued annually by the Office of Personnel.

f. Review Procedures.

1. The Departmental Executive Resources Board (ERB) screens nominations and recommends nominees to the Secretary. The ERB may convene an ad hoc group to assist in the initial screening process.

2. After review, the ERB submits to the Secretary documentation and a priority order listing of those nominees it recommends. A list of nominees not recommended by the ERB is also forwarded to the Secretary.

3. The Secretary forwards the Department's nominees to the Office of Personnel Management for consideration and potential selection by the President.

g. Award Payment. Payments must be made in the same fiscal year as the original nomination, unless the aggregate amount (base salary plus Rank Award plus bonuses) paid to the recipient exceeds the payable rate of Executive Level I.

.05 Senior Foreign Service Presidential Awards. Presidential Awards are presented by the President to members of the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) as authorized by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3965). (See Appendix D.)

APPENDIX G

HONOR AWARDS

A. DESCRIPTION.

The purpose of honor awards is to provide high-level recognition to deserving employees for their contributions to the Department. Forms of recognition are as follows:

Gold Medal - highest honorary award granted by the Secretary for extraordinary achievements in support of the critical objectives of the Department with a significant beneficial effect on the Nation or the world. The award can be presented to an individual or a group of two or more individuals, or to a Commerce organization.

Silver Medal - second highest honorary award granted by the Secretary for major contributions of exceptional value in support of the Department's overall goals in service to the Nation. The award can be presented to an individual or group of two or more individuals, or to a Commerce organization.

Bronze Medal - highest honorary award of the operating **unit** granted by the appropriate operating **unit** head or Secretarial Officer or equivalent for a significant contribution to that operating **unit**. The award can be presented to an individual or group of two or more individuals, or to an organization within the operating **unit**.

B. GOLD AND SILVER MEDAL AWARDS.

.01 Eligibility.

a. Gold and Silver Medals may be given to individuals, to groups of two or more, or to organizations.

b. Any office, division or sub**unit** within an operating **unit** or Departmental office which is formally recognized as a separate entity, as in organization orders or charts, may be nominated for an

organizational award. When two or more organizational **units** perform related functions and share responsibility for an achievement which is worthy of recognition, those organizations may be nominated jointly for an organizational award.

c. Nominating officials are responsible for ensuring that only those individuals and organizations which have made exceptional contributions and which are truly deserving of high honor are nominated.

d. When deciding which individuals are to be recognized, nominating officials should carefully consider the overall record of each person.

e. For individuals and groups, Gold and Silver Medals are ordinarily given only to employees whose performance is at the Commendable level or better. If a nominee does not have a current performance rating of Outstanding or Commendable (or its equivalent), specific reasons must be provided in the justification for why the award is recommended.

f. Except for Gold Medals given for heroic action involving jeopardy to life, Gold Medal recipients will normally have received other high level recognition of their achievements. Examples of appropriate previous recognition include Silver Medals, Presidential Rank Awards, high level operating **unit** recognition, and awards from outside organizations.

.02 Gold Criteria. A Gold Medal Award may be granted only for extraordinary accomplishments in support of the critical objectives of the Department with a significant beneficial effect on the Nation or the world. To warrant a Gold Medal Award, a contribution must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Achievement of critical program goals far surpassing expectations, marked by unusual creativity, energy, or persistence, contributing significantly to the welfare of the Nation;
- b. Unusually outstanding leadership or management that results in dramatic improvement in productivity, program effectiveness, or quality of the Department's service to the Nation;
- c. Scientific or technological breakthroughs that resolve longstanding problems or radically advance the state-of-the-art;
- d. Highly distinguished authorship or editorship that affects the primary principles of the discipline involved, opens up new fields of inquiry, or redefines major issues of investigation; or
- e. Heroic action involving jeopardy to life.

.03 Silver Criteria. A Silver Medal Award may be granted for major contributions which are of exceptional value in support of the Department's overall goals in service to the Nation. To warrant a Silver Medal Award, a contribution must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Achievement of important program goals, marked by excellence of performance and quality of results exceeding expectations;
- b. Superior leadership or management resulting in substantial improvements in productivity, program effectiveness, or the quality of the Department's service;
- c. Scientific or technological contributions that significantly advance the understanding, knowledge, or mastery of a given discipline;
- d. Exceptionally meritorious authorship or editorship that contributes significantly to the body of knowledge in a given field; or
- e. Unusual courage or competence in an emergency.

.04 Nominating Process.

- a. The Department requests nominations for Gold and Silver Medal Awards annually. Appropriate management officials then request nominations from within their organizations.
- b. Nominations are submitted by the appropriate approving official to the servicing personnel office.
- c. Incentive Awards Program Officers review nominations for adherence to award criteria and coordinate action with boards or committees, if appropriate. Nominations are then reviewed, and if approved are signed by the head of the operating **unit**. Approved nominations must be ranked in priority order and submitted through the Program Secretarial Officer (or equivalent) to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights. Gold and Silver Medal nominations must be ranked separately;

nominations for organizational awards should be ranked among nominations for individuals or groups.

d. Nominations must be received by the Department's Office of Personnel by the due date established each year.

.05 Submission Requirements. Each nomination must describe clearly, in nontechnical language, the contribution to be recognized, its impact on the operating **unit** or Departmental mission, and the degree to which the contribution exceeds normal job responsibilities. The justification should specify which of the criteria in Sections B.02 and .03 the contribution meets. For nominations of groups, a justification must be prepared to support the nomination of each individual in the group. The following documentation is required:

a. Individual and group medal awards. Nominations must include:

1. CD-491, Honor Awards Nomination and justification(s);
2. Current position description(s) ; and
3. Current performance appraisal rating of record for each individual nominated.

b. Organizational awards. Nominations must include:

1. CD-491, Honor Awards Nomination with information on the individual who is to receive the award on behalf of the organization, and a justification; and
2. Departmental Organization Order (DOO) for the organization to be recognized. If the organization is not defined in a DOO, organization charts or other documentation may be submitted. Use of these forms is mandatory and no other attachments may be considered. An original and seven copies of the above documents (in the order stated) are required by the Department for each Gold and Silver Medal Award nomination. Two additional copies of each CD-491 should also be submitted to the Department. Operating **units** may request additional copies.

.06 Review Procedures. The Department's Incentive Awards Board reviews Gold and Silver Medal Award nominations and recommends approval or disapproval to the Secretary. The DIAB may recommend the approval or disapproval of each member of a group award nomination.

.07 Award Presentation. Gold and Silver Medal Awards are presented by the Secretary at a Departmental Honor Awards Ceremony. Each individual Gold or Silver Medal recipient or group member receives an engraved medal, a lapel emblem, and a framed certificate that briefly describes his or her contribution. An organizational award consists of a medal and a framed Gold or Silver Medal Award Certificate which is inscribed with the name of the organization to be recognized and which briefly describes the organization's contribution.

C. BRONZE MEDAL AWARDS.

.01 Eligibility.

a. Bronze Medals may be given to individuals or groups of two or more, or to organizations.

b. Any office, division or sub**unit** within an operating **unit** or Departmental office which is formally recognized as a separate entity, as in organization orders or charts, may be nominated for an organizational award. When two or more organizational **units** perform related functions and share responsibility for an achievement which is worthy of recognition, those organizations may be nominated jointly for an organizational award.

c. Nominating officials are responsible for ensuring that only those individuals and organizations which have made significant contributions and which are truly deserving of high honor are nominated.

d. When deciding which individuals are to be recognized, nominating officials should carefully consider the overall record of each person.

e. Any employee who has a current performance rating of less than Fully Successful may not be nominated for a Bronze Medal Award.

.02 Bronze Criteria. A Bronze Medal Award may be granted for a significant contribution to the employee's operating **unit**. Contributions must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Accomplishing improvements in management systems that make them more effective or more efficient;
- b. Demonstration of unusual or creative ability in the development and improvement of methods and procedures;
- c. A significant contribution affecting major programs, or a scientific accomplishment; or
- d. Superior performance of assigned tasks with the operating **unit** for at least five consecutive years.

.03 Nominating Process.

- a. Operating **units** should request nominations for Bronze Medal Awards at the same time Gold and Silver Medal Award nominations are requested.
- b. Nominations for Bronze Medal Awards must be submitted to the servicing personnel officer of the operating **unit**.
- c. Operating **unit** Incentive Awards Program Officers provide specific submission requirements to the organizations they service when nominations are requested.

.04 Submission Requirements. Each nomination must describe clearly, in nontechnical language, the contribution to be recognized, its impact on the operating **unit**, and the degree to which the contribution exceeds normal job responsibilities. The justification should specify which of the criteria in Section C.02 the contribution meets. For nominations of groups, a justification must be prepared to support the nomination of each individual in the group. The following documentation is required:

- a. Individual and group medal awards. Nominations must include:
 1. CD-491, Honor Awards Nomination and justification(s) ;
 2. Current position description(s) ; and
 3. Current performance appraisal rating of record for each individual nominated.
- b. Organizational Awards. Nominations must include:
 1. CD-491, Honor Awards Nomination with information on the individual who is to receive the award on behalf of the organization, and a justification; and
 2. Department organization Order (DOO) , organization chart, or other appropriate documentation for the organization to be recognized.

.05 Review Procedures. Operating **unit** boards or committees, if appropriate, review and recommend Bronze Medal Award nominations to the appropriate operating **unit** head or Secretarial Officer (or equivalent) for approval.

.06 Award Presentation. Bronze Medal Awards are presented by the appropriate operating **unit** head or Secretarial Officer (or equivalent) at an annual ceremony scheduled by the operating **unit**. Each Bronze Medal recipient or group member receives an engraved medal, a lapel emblem, and a framed certificate that briefly describes his or her contribution. An organizational award consists of a medal and a framed Bronze Medal Award Certificate, which is inscribed with the name of the organization to be recognized and which briefly describes the organization's contribution.

APPENDIX H

ON THE SPOT AWARDS

A. PURPOSE. The purpose of this award is to provide supervisors with a means of recognizing employees for those day-to-day efforts which contribute "in a special way" to getting the job done. This non-monetary award program provides for immediate recognition with minimal documentation, and serves as a means of giving employees recognition for nonrecurring contributions.

B. GENERAL POLICY. On-the-Spot Awards are granted by supervisors to recognize accomplishments which represent steps toward achievement of organizational goals or purposes, but for which higher level recognition such as honor awards, performance awards, or superior accomplishment awards are not appropriate. Awards may be granted to employees for noteworthy contributions which have benefited the employing office, the employee's bureau, or the Department.

01. Operating **units** may implement instant award programs which meet their specific needs and are compatible with their organizational climate. This program is not meant to replace other traditional methods of recognition, but rather to increase supervisors' options in rewarding and reinforcing employee excellence.

C. OPERATING **UNIT** RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

01. The program must be described in a document, signed by the head of the operating **unit** or Departmental Office, and contain at least the information prescribed in Section D of this Appendix.

02. The program must be publicized to all employees.

03. The program must reward small contributions, which would not qualify for either performance awards or special act or service awards.

04. The presentation of the award to the employee must be made shortly after the contribution.

05. The value of an individual award item may not exceed \$75, and an employee may not receive awards under this program which exceed \$125 in value in a single performance year. For example, if awards are valued at \$25, then the employee may receive only 5 awards during that performance year.

06. The program must include procedures for documenting awards on form CD-326A, "Recommendation for On-the-Spot Award". (Exhibit 4) .

07. The program document must be submitted to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights for review and approval.

D. OPERATING **UNIT** PLAN

Each plan must specify:

01. What types of contributions are eligible for recognition under the program. Examples include, but are not limited to: planning a special event which is particularly successful, completion of a short-term project, or handling an unusually heavy workload.

02. Who is eligible to participate in the program.

03. The delegations of authority under the program, including supervisory authorities.

04. The award items that will be given out under the program, including the dollar values.

05. The plans for procuring, distributing, and controlling access to supplies of award items.

06. The frequency and timing of awards.

07. The procedures for notifying employees and supervisors about the program.

08. The program recordkeeping requirements.

APPENDIX I

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

.01 Career Service Recognition. Career service recognition is granted to employees who complete 10 years of Federal service, and thereafter at 10-year intervals.

a. Creditable service is determined using the service computation date for leave purposes, which includes total civilian service and some honorable military service.

b. The career service emblem and certificate serve as the primary form of length-of-service recognition. Career service emblems are available through the GSA supply system.

.02 Secretary of Commerce Special Medal.

a. The Secretary may grant the Secretary of Commerce Special Medal to a person other than an employee of the **United** States Government whenever the Secretary determines that such a presentation is appropriate.

b. The Secretary of Commerce Special Medal is a bronze medal, suitably engraved.

c. The Secretary of Commerce Special Medal is presented only to a private citizen or national of the **United** States for a significant contribution, act, service, or cooperation in the public interest or to an official of a foreign government or international organization, or to a national of a foreign country, to recognize a particular event, activity, or cooperative effort of official interest to the Secretary.

.03 Commerce Award for Outstanding Administrative Management. The Assistant Secretary for Administration grants this Departmental award to employees who make outstanding contributions in the fields of administration such as financial management, data processing, budget, information management, and personnel management. Awards are given for four types of achievements: Extra-mile service, productivity improvement, systems improvements, and resource-sharing. The Assistant Secretary determines the number of awards to be given each year and the amount of each award. Nominations are requested near the end of the fiscal year by the Department's Office of Personnel.

.04 Departmental Awards. The Department may establish other awards. A new award may be considered only if written justification supports the conclusion that awards already established under the provisions of this Order are not adequate to meet organization, mission, or employee needs. Any proposal for establishing an award, including the related certificate, must be forwarded, through the appropriate Secretarial Officer, to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights for approval.

.05 Special Operating **Unit** Awards. Individual operating **units** may establish employee awards such as "Equal Employment Opportunity Awards," "Supervisor of the Year," or "Scientist of the Year," which are appropriate to their particular interests in recognizing certain groups of employees and which do not detract from the effectiveness of the awards established under this Order. The guidelines in section .04 above for establishing Department awards apply to establishing new operating **unit** awards.

.06 Major Awards Sponsored By External Organizations. Numerous outside organizations sponsor award programs to recognize outstanding Federal employees and major achievements in government. These organizations invite the Department to submit nominations. These programs are

additional means for recognizing the achievements of Commerce employees and for publicizing their accomplishments on a national level.

.07 Honorary Recognition to Employees of Other Federal Agencies and Private Citizens and Organizations. Honorary awards (other than Medal Awards) may be granted in recognition of special services or other beneficial contributions to the Department. When it is considered appropriate to award a certificate or other similar token of appreciation, the form of the award must be approved by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights. Examples of the types of actions or contributions for which these awards may be considered include:

- a. Exemplary service in an advisory capacity to the Department's programs or projects;
- b. Direct assistance to the Department through actions or useful ideas which are beneficial in eliminating or minimizing problems or in actively contributing to mission accomplishment;
- c. Assistance to the Government through the cooperative use of facilities, equipment, or staff;
- d. Courageous or heroic actions in support of a Federal activity or mission; and
- e. Significant contributions in the form of valuable consultation.

.08 Department of State Awards. The Department of State considers nominations of Foreign Service employees for the Secretary of State Award, and the Award for Valor. (See Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual, Volume 3, section 642.2b for specifics on criteria and nominating procedures.)

APPENDIX J

RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES

A. TYPES OF CERTIFICATES.

Recognition certificates are standardized for Department-wide use and are the only types of award certificates an operating **unit** may use. If new certificates are proposed for establishment, they must be submitted in accordance with provisions of B. below. The types of award certificates are:

.01 Departmental Certificates.

- a. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medal Award Certificates are granted to employees and organizations who receive Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal Awards. Gold and Silver Medal Award certificates are signed by the Secretary and presented at the Departmental Honor Awards Program ceremony. Bronze Medal Award certificates are signed by a Secretarial Officer or equivalent or head of the operating **unit** and presented at an appropriate ceremony.
- b. Commerce Award for Outstanding Administrative Management Certificates are granted annually to recipients of the Commerce Award for Outstanding Administrative Management and presented by the Assistant Secretary for Administration in an appropriate ceremony.
- c. Certification of Appreciation. There are two types of certificates of appreciation:
 1. Certificates 11" x 14" in size are granted to non-employees of the Department who have made outstanding contributions or who have performed significant services for the Department. They are signed by the Secretary, Secretarial Officer, or head of the operating **unit**, and presented by an appropriate official, depending on the nature and significance of the contribution.
 2. Certificates 8 1/2" x 11" in size are granted to employees and student volunteers for honorary recognition, significant accomplishments, or appreciation of their services. They are signed and presented by the Secretarial Officer or head of the operating **unit**, or other official if appropriate.
- d. Certificates of Recognition (CD-184) are granted to employees who receive Performance Awards and QSIs/MSIs (see Appendices A and B) or Special Act or Service Awards (see Appendix E). They may also be granted to employees who have received outstanding performance ratings, if the employees did not receive performance awards. The CD-184's are prepared by the servicing personnel office, signed by the appropriate approving official, and presented to employees in a

suitable ceremony.

e. Suggestion Certificates are granted to employees in official recognition and appreciation of valuable suggestions which have been adopted. The certificates are signed by the head of the operating **unit**. (See Appendix E.)

f. Length of Service Certificates are granted to employees to recognize significant milestones in their careers from 10 years on in 10-year increments. They are provided to an eligible employee's supervisor by the servicing personnel office for presentation to the employee by the supervisor or other higher level official within the operating **unit**.

02. Special Operating **Unit** Award Certificates are granted to employees by the head of the operating **unit** for honorary awards pertinent to the operating **unit**. Examples are the Crittenden Award, National Bureau of Standards; Administrator's Award, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; National Technical Information Service Employee of the Year Award; and Clerical Employee of the Year, Patent and Trademark Office.

03. Procedures for Obtaining Certificates.

a. Operating **unit** certificates are prepared and granted upon approval of the specific recognition. The Incentive Awards Program Officer in the servicing personnel office distributes the certificates.

b. The Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medal Certificates, and the Commerce Award for Outstanding Administrative Management Certificates are issued only by the Office of Personnel. Copies of all other Departmental certificates can be kept on hand and issued by the servicing personnel office. Whenever a certificate requires the Secretary's or Deputy Secretary's signature, a written request must be forwarded, through the appropriate Secretarial Office or equivalent, to the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights for approval and submission to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary. Written requests from the servicing personnel office must include the following information:

1. Reasons for awarding each of the certificates;
2. Name of the official who is to sign the certificates;
3. Complete name of each recipient; and
4. The **citation** to be printed on each certificate.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF RECOGNITION OR SERVICE CERTIFICATES.

Policies and procedures for recognition or service certificates must be approved by the Director for Personnel and Civil Rights. A proposal to establish a certificate must be forwarded through the appropriate Secretarial Officer or equivalent. The proposal must be specific as to the purpose, form, and administration of the program, and must include a draft of the certificate to be used. The Office of Personnel reviews the proposal for appropriateness of purpose, and obtains the advice of the Office of Publications concerning the format and design of the certificate.

The Department coordinates the design and issuance of recognition and service certificates to ensure maximum standardization and appropriateness of design and to facilitate orderly stocking and control of their use.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THE EXHIBITS AT THE END OF THIS ORDER ARE NOT INCLUDED HEREIN -

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1

Effective Date: 1992-10-28

Amendment 1

INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

Page Insertions. Appendix K, Time Off as an Incentive Award, is added to the Order.

This appendix implements the provisions of Public Law 101-509, Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act of 1990, Section 201. This Section authorizes agencies to grant employees time off in recognition of certain accomplishments or contributions.

Signed - Director for Human Resources Management

Approved Signet - Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration

Remove Pages Dated Insert Pages Dated
Appendix K October 28, 1992

USCOMM-DC - 93-8922

APPENDIX K DAO 202-451

TIME OFF AS AN INCENTIVE AWARD

A. INTRODUCTION

This Appendix implements the provisions of Public Law 101-509, Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, Section 201. This section of the law authorizes agencies to grant employees time off in recognition of certain accomplishments or contributions. The authority is regulated by 5 CFR Part 451, Subpart C.

B. POLICY

.01 Definition. "Time Off Award" means an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay.

.02 Coverage. All employees of the Department are eligible for time off awards except:

- a. Officers appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, or by the President alone, to positions for which rates of basic compensation may exceed the maximum rate provided in the General Schedule, and such other officers as may have been designated under authority delegated in Executive Order 10540, dated June 29, 1954, (19 CFR 3983), to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;
- b. Employees who do not have a regular, established tour of duty prescribed in advance (i.e., intermittent or WAE employees);
- c. Temporary employees hired solely for the purpose of work on a specific construction project and paid at hourly rates;
- d. Employees appointed without compensation;

- e. Employees paid on a fee basis;
- f. Commissioned Officers of the NOAA Corps;
- g. Employees in the Senior Executive Service (SES); and
- h. Employees whose current rating of record under one of the Department's performance appraisal systems is less than Fully Successful (or its equivalent).

.03 Eligibility.

Time off awards may be granted to covered employees to recognize achievements such as the following:

- a. Making a high quality contribution involving a difficult or important project of assignment;

DAO 202-451 - 2 - APPENDIX K

- b. Displaying initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline;
- c. Using initiative and creativity in making improvements in a product, activity, program or service; or
- d. Ensuring the mission of the work **unit** is accomplished during a difficult period by successfully completing additional work or a project assignment while maintaining the employee's own workload.

.04 Delegation of Authority.

- a. Authority to approve time off awards is hereby delegated to Secretarial Officers and heads of operating **units** and Departmental offices. This authority may be redelegated subject to limitations provided for in this paragraph. Any redelegation of this authority must be documented in writing before the authority may be exercised.
- b. Authority to grant up to a full day of time off as an incentive award may be delegated to any leave approving official of the Department. A full day is the length of the scheduled work day for the particular employee being recognized on the day that the time off is given.
- c. Time off of more than one day must be reviewed and approved by an official at a higher organizational level than the manager or supervisor who initiated the award nomination.
- d. All time off awards of any length must be reviewed by the personnel officer (or designee) for technical compliance before the time off may be taken.

.05 Use of Time Off.

- a. Time off granted as an incentive award must be scheduled and taken within one year after the date of award is made; i.e., the date of the SF-50 effecting the award, normally the first day of

the first pay period following final approval of the award. If the time is not taken off within one year, it is lost and may not be restored. No other award or compensation may be substituted for it.

b. Time off is considered excused absence. Scheduling of time off is subject to supervisory approval.

c. If an employee is incapacitated for duty during a period of time off as an incentive award, that period of absence may be recorded as sick leave, and the time off scheduled for another time, within the limits of paragraph .05a.

.06 Limitations.

APPENDIX K - 3 - DAO 202-451

a. The total amount of time off granted to a full-time employee as an incentive award during a leave year may not exceed 80 hours. Total time off granted as an incentive award during a leave year to a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may not exceed the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty.

b. Time off granted as an incentive award for any single contribution by a full-time employee may not exceed 40 hours. For part-time employees or employees with an uncommon tour of duty, the limit for any single contribution is one half the maximum that may be granted during the leave year.

c. The minimum time off award is a half day (half of the scheduled work hours for the employee on the day of the excused absence). If the employee's work day is not an even number of hours, the half day must be rounded up so that the amount of leave granted is in multiples of one-hour **units**.

d. The amount of time off granted must be proportionate to the value of the contribution being recognized. Exhibits 1 and 2 with this Order may be used as guides to compare the value of the contributions to the value of the time off granted. These exhibits need not be rigorously followed, but serve as board benchmarks for setting award amounts.

.07 Processing Time Off Awards.

a. Time off awards must be recommended and approved in writing on Form CD-326, "Recommendation for Recognition." On item 7 of the CD-326, "Type of Recognition", the box labelled "Other" should be checked, the type of award should be specified as a time off award, and the amount of time off should be indicated. Item 12, "Justification" must include a specific description of the reason for the award. The CD-326 must then be signed by the recommending officials and any others as required by the applicable delegation of authority, and submitted to the servicing personnel office.

b. The servicing personnel office must review the award recommendation as soon as possible to assure that all technical requirements are met, and notify the recommending official of its disposition of the case. An employee may not be granted time off until the personnel officer authorizes the award. The personnel officer or designee must sign the CD-326 for approved awards,

and document the award with an SF-50. More detailed instructions on processing the actions and record keeping are presented in Personnel/Payroll Processing Note No. 106.

c. The time off taken by the employee must be documented on the Time and Attendance Report as excused absence. More detailed instructions for timekeeping are presented in Time and Attendance Processing Note No. 91-02.

DAO 202-451 - 4 - APPENDIX K

C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ACTIONS

.01 Time off is an award independent of other types of awards, to be given when it is more appropriate than monetary or honorary awards. Managers and supervisors who grant time off as an incentive award must ensure that the total recognition granted for any single achievement or period of performance is proportionate to the contribution being recognized.

.02 Since a time off award is not a monetary award, its converted monetary value does not count against the limitations on performance awards stated in Section B.04 of this Orders.

.03 Due weight must be given to time off awards when rating and ranking an employee for promotion, as provided in 5 U.S.C. 3362.

D. RECORDING KEEPING

The SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, documenting this award must be filed in the employee's Official Personnel Folder. The CD-326 must be filed in the Employee Performance File and retained for two years, and a copy must be attached to the certified Time and Attendance Report as supporting documentation.

NOAA INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

NAO 202-451 --- Iss. 20 May 98; Eff. 13 May 98; as Amended 13 Apr 99

SECTION 1.	<u>PURPOSE/BACKGROUND</u>
SECTION 2.	<u>REFERENCES</u>
SECTION 3.	<u>IMPLEMENTATION PLANS</u>
SECTION 4.	<u>MONETARY AWARDS</u>
SECTION 5.	<u>NON-MONETARY AND HONORARY AWARDS</u>
SECTION 6.	<u>LINE/STAFF/PROGRAM OFFICE SPECIFIC AWARDS</u>
SECTION 7.	<u>ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT</u>
SECTION 8.	<u>TRAINING AND INFORMATION</u>
SECTION 9.	<u>RECORD KEEPING</u>
SECTION 10.	<u>EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES</u>
APPENDIX A.	<u>SAMPLE INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</u>
APPENDIX B.	<u>AWARD AMOUNTS SCALE FOR INTANGIBLE BENEFITS</u>
APPENDIX C.	<u>AWARD AMOUNTS SCALE FOR TANGIBLE BENEFITS</u>
APPENDIX D.	<u>CASH-IN-YOUR-ACCOUNT</u>
APPENDIX E.	<u>NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AWARD</u>

SECTION 1. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 The implementation of the two-level performance management program, with its pass/fail ratings, and the implementation of the DOC Demonstration Project (DEMO), has brought about a new approach to the awards program. For employees covered by the two level program, performance awards, other than Quality Step Increases (QSIs), will no longer be tied directly to the performance appraisal time period. Instead, awards should be given throughout the year, to individuals or groups, to acknowledge and reward significant efforts and accomplishments in a timely fashion. Guidance for performance bonuses for employees covered by the DEMO is contained in the DEMO Operating Procedures dated March 1998.

.02 The awards program provides a way to recognize employees' significant achievements and ideas that benefit the NOAA, the Department of Commerce (DOC),

and the Federal government. As a management tool, it provides a visible and effective way to communicate and reinforce those objectives most important to organizational success. By encouraging goals related to growth, creativity, and innovation, awards can maintain and reinforce the importance of productivity and customer service.

.03 To be effective, the awards program must:

- a. encourage employees toward increased productivity and creativity, and support and enhance achievement of strategic and operating plan goals;
- b. be non-discriminatory in application and effect;
- c. use incentives for their intended purposes, not as substitutes for other personnel actions or pay;
- d. be regarded by managers and supervisors as an important motivational tool; and
- e. ensure that offices allocate adequate budget and support services to provide for prompt action and effective publicity.

.04 This NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) supersedes NAO 202-451, NOAA Incentive Awards Program, dated April 6, 1989. It shall be used in conjunction with the DEMO Operating Procedures and the Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 202-451, Incentive Awards Program, dated August 14, 1990, and supplements policy and procedures in that Order. This is not a restatement of the DOC policy, but an extension of coverage to those delegations made to the NOAA and redelegated by the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere to management officials. The DEMO Operating Procedures take precedence over this NAO should there be any conflicting guidance in the two documents.

SECTION 2. REFERENCES. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

For a complete description of the DOC policies, procedures, and requirements for incentive awards, refer to DAO 202-451 and the DEMO Operating Procedures.

SECTION 3. IMPLEMENTATION PLANS. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 Line Offices/Staff Offices/Program Offices (LOs/SOs/POs) are encouraged to develop incentive award implementation plans and to provide the plans to all employees. The plans should:

- a. be in writing;
- b. be made available to all employees, including updates as necessary;

- c. grant recognition based on the high-level performance of employees or on the value of their contributions to the Federal government;
- d. be non-discriminatory in application and effect;
- e. describe the cash award pools (e.g., 1.5 percent of salary and budget costs), and their distribution within the organization;
- f. provide for an adequate budget to support prompt action on award recommendations and appropriate publicity of award activities, prepare certificates, letters of congratulations, order plaques, and arrange appropriate ceremonies;
- g. identify the awards used by the organization, the delegations of authority for approval of each award, and the method of presenting each award to the recipients; and
- h. describe any organization-specific awards.

.02 For offices which include bargaining unit employees, partnership with the union(s) is encouraged in the development of all awards plans. At a minimum, individuals must ensure their labor relations obligations are met prior to implementation of their plans. Offices shall contact their servicing Human Resources/Labor Relations Specialists for guidance. See [Appendix A](#) for a sample implementation plan.

SECTION 4. MONETARY AWARDS. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 POLICY.

- a. Awards are made as one-time, lump sum payments.
- b. Award pool amounts should be established as close to the beginning of each fiscal year as practicable.
- c. All NOAA employees, except employees in the Senior Executive Service, are eligible for awards covered by this section. Any employee, or group of employees, whose performance warrants recognition, may be considered for an appropriate award. To be eligible to receive awards, employees must have current ratings of "Meets or Exceeds," or "Eligible."

NOTE: Award amounts may be prorated for employees who: 1) work part time; 2) have been in the position less than 1 year; 3) have had extended periods of absence. This decision will be made by the individual LO/SO/PO.

- d. Assistant Administrators (AAs) and NOAA SO/PO Directors may approve cash awards of \$5,000 or less for general workforce employees and NOAA Corps Officers. This authority may be further delegated as determined by the individual LO/SO/PO.

e. Cash awards exceeding \$5,000 and up to \$10,000 are submitted through the Director for Human Resources Management, NOAA, and the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere before being forwarded to the Director for Human Resources Management, DOC, for approval by the Secretary. Awards in excess of \$10,000 require approval by the Office of Personnel Management.

f. A copy of the completed and approved CD-326s and accompanying narratives will be forwarded to the servicing human resources offices (SHROs), where they will be input into the personnel/payroll system. SHROs will notify the supervisors of the effective dates. The employees will receive SF-50s documenting the awards.

02. TYPES OF AWARDS.

a. **SPECIAL ACT OR SERVICE AWARD.** This award may be granted to an employee, or group of employees, to recognize accomplishments in the public interest related to official duties, suggestions, inventions, or personal efforts which contribute to the efficiency, economy, or improvements in Government operations.

1. The award may be for specific achievement(s) or a period of exceptional productivity at any time during the performance year, for accomplishments that may or may not be covered in the individual's performance plan. Examples of such achievements would be:

(a) completing an absent co-worker's major assignment with exceptional skill and success so that organizational goals are met;

(b) identifying an innovative solution to an issue outside an employee's planned work assignment but which benefits the organization as a whole;

(c) saving significant money for the organization or government as a whole;

(d) using new technologies or methods to greatly improve an organization's (or a government-wide) product or service;

(e) streamlining a process which helps the organization provide its products and services, or meet its goals, more effectively;

(f) directing a team effort with exceptional skill and sensitivity;

(g) handling an unforeseen problem with minimal disruption to the overall work assignment; or

(h) maintaining exceptional productivity during a period of time.

2. The achievement is characterized by a defined effort as opposed to sustained high performance throughout an entire appraisal cycle. As such, the award should be given as close to the accomplishment as possible. [NOTE: Recognition for accomplishments

covered by a DEMO employee performance plan is made at the end of the performance cycle with a performance bonus.]

3. The employee's expected future level of performance is not a major consideration.

4. A written justification must be prepared by the recommending official and accompany the CD-326 award nomination. The justification need not be extensive, but adequate documentation might include:

- (a) what is significant about the achievement;
- (b) the scope and extent of the achievement, and the amount of savings, if any;
- (c) clear indication of how the achievement exceeds normal performance expectations;
- (d) impact of the achievement on work, goals, and/or mission of the organization;
- (e) magnitude of the achievement in relation to the employee's job responsibility (degree of ingenuity reflected); or
- (f) period of time covered by the award.

5. The award justification should make it readily clear to the reader that the award is warranted. Because of the flexibility with this award, it is recommended that each LO/SO/PO establish a range of award amounts associated with contributions and achievements for their respective organizations. Appendices B and C may be used, as is, to determine award amounts or as a guideline for developing such a scale.

b. QSI. The QSI is the only performance award tied to the appraisal period. The supervisor must write a justification providing specific examples of the employee's exceptional performance. This justification must be documented in the appraisal of record. It is possible for an employee to receive other awards (e.g. special act, cash-in-your-account, time-off awards) during the same rating cycle as a QSI; however, the justification must indicate that the basis for the QSI goes well beyond that indicated for the other awards received during the appraisal period.

1. NOAA Corps Officers and employees who are part of the Demonstration Project are not eligible for this award.

2. A QSI **may** be granted in addition to a regular within-grade increase if the following eligibility requirements are met. The employee:

- (a) has held the same grade and type of position, and not been detailed or temporarily promoted (unless to the same type of position), and has been in a pay status for at least 6 months before the end of the appraisal cycle;

(b) does not have a promotion in progress or anticipated within 60 days after the effective date of the increase.

(c) is not at the top step of his/her grade; and

(d) has not received a QSI within 52 consecutive calendar weeks preceding the effective date of the increase.*

****MULTIPLE QSI**s: The granting of multiple QSIs should occur only in rare circumstances. To be eligible for another QSI the following year, the employee must have demonstrated current performance at a **significantly higher** level than that of the previous year. The documentation must be sent to the appropriate AA or equivalent - or to a management official to whom this authority has been delegated - for review and approval.*

3. The QSI rewards performance that consistently exceeds the performance indicators for quality products, teamwork, and/or customer service to such a degree that there is rarely room for improvement. The impact of the employee's work must be of such significance that:

(a) organizational objectives were accomplished that otherwise would not have been;

(b) accuracy and thoroughness of the employee's work are exceptionally reliable;

(c) application of technical knowledge and skills goes beyond that expected for the position;

(d) employee significantly improves the work processes for which he/she is responsible;

(e) work is planned so that it follows the most logical sequence;

(f) contingency plans have been developed to handle potential problems, new priorities and changes in procedures and programs are quickly adapted;

(g) strengths in planning and adaptability result in early or timely completion of work under all but the most extraordinary circumstances, resulting in cost savings to the government;

(h) interpersonal relationships are handled with exceptional skill, anticipating and avoiding potential causes of conflict and actively promoting cooperation and teamwork with clients, coworkers, and supervisors; and

(i) oral and written expression are exceptionally clear and effective. Complicated or controversial subjects are presented or explained effectively to a variety of audiences so that desired outcomes are achieved.

c. **CASH-IN-A-FLASH/CASH-IN-YOUR-ACCOUNT (CIYA).** This award provides supervisors the opportunity to give employees more immediate recognition for a job well done. Unlike other monetary awards which are paid at biweekly intervals to coincide with regular paydays, CIYA awards may be paid at any time. This program provides a means of giving employees recognition for non-recurring contributions, with a minimum of documentation. **CIYA is NOAA's variation of the Department's Cash-In-A-Flash program.** See [Appendix D](#) for procedures.

(1) NOAA Corps Officers are not eligible for this award.

(2) CIYA awards are appropriate in instances where higher-level monetary or honor awards would not be warranted. Following are some examples of the kind of efforts that would qualify:

(a) completing a short-term project or significant milestone in less time than expected or when unusual difficulties had to be overcome;

(b) developing new or revised procedures or other contributions toward improving office productivity;

(c) handling an unusually heavy workload, e.g., because co-workers are absent;

(d) completing a significant special assignment that is outside normal job responsibilities; and

(e) planning a special event that is particularly successful.

(3) This program is not meant to replace other methods of recognition, only to increase the supervisor's options for rewarding and reinforcing employee excellence.

(4) An employee may receive awards in net amounts of \$50, \$100, \$150, \$200, \$250, \$300, \$350, \$400, \$450, or \$500. An employee, as an individual or part of a group, may not exceed a net total of \$500 in a single calendar year under this program. There is no limitation on the number of awards granted to an employee as long as the dollar amount does not exceed the \$500 limitation. [NOTE: Unlike other monetary award amounts, CIYA amounts are reflected as net payments rather than a gross dollar value before taxes are withheld.] **IN ORDER TO AVOID TAX LIABILITY COMPLICATIONS, CIYA AWARDS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED DURING THE LAST TWO PAY PERIODS OF THE CALENDAR YEAR.**

d. **ADMINISTRATOR'S AWARD.** The Administrator's Award is given annually in recognition of employees or groups who have made significant contributions to NOAA programs.

(1) A request for nominations will be issued each year by the Director for HRM, NOAA. Managers should consider potential nominees during the course of the year. Each

nomination must describe clearly, in nontechnical language, the contribution to be recognized, its impact on the operating unit, and the degree to which the contribution exceeds normal job responsibilities.

(2) The award nomination must be submitted in narrative form, not to exceed two pages, to LO/SO/PO representatives (who will be identified in the request memo), complying with any additional instructions and deadlines required by the respective offices.

(3) Senior Executives may not receive the monetary portion of this award, but may receive honorary recognition through the Administrator's Award.

(4) There is no limit on the total number of Administrator's Awards given in a calendar year. The award consists of a plaque and a \$5,000 stipend. In the case of group awards, the \$5,000 is split equally among the members. All awards are funded by the appropriate LO/SO/PO.

(5) Areas in which significant contributions to NOAA programs will be considered for Administrator's Awards include: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Diversity, scientific research, public service, engineering development, environmental conservation, policy development, administrative support, public affairs, and information systems.

(6) In evaluating nominations submitted for the Administrator's Awards, the following factors shall be considered:

(a) the importance of the nominee's personal contribution to NOAA programs and the extent or degree to which it served an urgent need;

(b) the uniqueness and originality of the nominee's contribution;

(c) whether the contribution brought unusual credit to NOAA and the DOC;

(d) whether the nominee's contribution resulted in an unusually important and clearly demonstrated improvement in a NOAA program;

(e) if a nominee is a supervisor, whether his or her specific contribution demonstrates significant leadership skills such as the ability to lead and guide a competent staff, develop staff talents, and successfully run a productive program;

(f) exceptional leadership, skill, ingenuity, or ability displayed in administration or performance of duties which accomplished significant savings in money, time, staff resources, or equipment;

(g) creation or development of a major improvement in a service which results in a high degree of benefit to NOAA or the DOC;

(h) successful implementation of new or improved policies in NOAA;

- (i) exceptional skill and ingenuity in focusing on policy needs;
- (j) contributions in engineering development in the areas of applied technology systems or equipment developed; and
- (k) important scientific research contributions.

e. **NOAA TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AWARD.** The purpose of this award is to recognize NOAA scientific, engineering, and technical employees for: (1) inventions or other outstanding scientific or technological contributions of value to the United States due to commercial applications and (2) exemplary activities that promote the domestic transfer of science and technology developed within NOAA and result in the use of such science and technology by American industry or business, universities, State or local government, or other non-Federal parties.

This award responds to the requirement of Section 13 of the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-502). For further details see [Appendix E](#).

f. **SUGGESTION AWARD.** A suggestion award is granted for an idea that contributes directly to the economy, efficiency, or effectiveness of operations. The award amount is based on the benefits realized as a result of the implementation of the idea.

1. **Policy.** To warrant consideration for an award, a suggestion:

- (a) must be processed under the employee suggestion program, except when an idea is implemented outside the suggestion program, but is deemed worthy of recognition by an award as allowed by DAO 202-454, Suggestion Program, dated August 14, 1990);
- (b) must be adopted by an official with authority to adopt it; and
- (c) must provide tangible benefits to the government with a value of at least \$250 or comparable intangible benefits, or a combination of tangible or intangible benefits, in order to receive a monetary award.

2. **Responsibility.**

(a) The employee must submit suggestions on Form CD-170 to:

1) the LO/SO/PO Incentive Award Program Officer (IAPO) *if the suggestion pertains to programs or operations contained entirely within the employee's primary organization, e.g., NWS, NOS, etc.*; or 2) to the NOAA (IAPO), OFA 41, SSMC-4, if the suggestion concerns matters outside the employee's primary organization. The employee proposing the suggestion must:

- (1) describe the specific problem or objective, present a solution or plan for improvement, and show benefit to the government;

- (2) include sufficient information to clarify the proposal (sketches, photos, stock, numbers, etc.);
 - (3) sign the form to signify agreement that the U.S. Government may use the suggestion without incurring any further claim by the suggester or heirs; and
 - (4) indicate if more than one person is involved in submitting the suggestion.
- (b) The supervisor should encourage the employee's participation in the Suggestion Program and assist, if requested, in developing the proposal. See DAO 202-454 for a complete description of the program.
- (c) The primary organization or NOAA IAPO will acknowledge receipt of all suggestions within 15 workdays, and must:
- (1) process all suggestions received as stated in DAO 202-454 Section 5;
 - (2) refer the suggestion to an evaluator in the organization having primary responsibility for operation, procedures, system, or program that is the subject of the suggestion;
 - (3) track all suggestions and maintain appropriate records; and
 - (4) arrange for payment of any approved award.
- (5) The suggestion evaluator will give proper consideration to all suggestions; recommend whether or not it should be adopted; recommend the form of award the suggester should receive if the award shall be adopted; complete Form CD-170, "Official Suggestion Evaluation," within 30 work days and return it to the originating awards program officer.

3. Award Amounts.

- (a) The signed and dated CD-170 must show the amount of the cash award, and will serve as the documentation for the award.
- (b) In calculating the benefits of an adopted suggestion to the government, the evaluator should estimate the net benefits (i.e., the total savings minus any implementation costs).
- (c) Cash awards for adopted suggestions are normally based on the estimated first-year benefits to the Government. If savings extend over more than 1 year, the award may be based on the average annual savings for a longer period, not exceeding 5 years.

4. Process.

- (a) Award recommendations are forwarded through organizational channels to the approving official.

(b) Awards in excess of \$5,000 for adopted suggestions must be submitted to and approved by the DOC Incentive Awards Board.

(c) If a suggestion is not recommended for adoption by the evaluator, the employee proposing the suggestion may request a reconsideration from the DOC Incentive Awards Officer.

5. Entitlement Period.

(a) The suggestion award entitlement period is the two-year period following the date of final action on a suggestion during which the suggester retains the right to be considered:

(1) for an additional award if additional benefits result after adoption, or;

(2) for an award if a non-adopted suggestion is implemented within the 2-year period.

g. INVENTION AWARDS. An invention award is cash or honorary recognition granted to a Federal employee for an invention which is of interest to the U.S. Government or the public and for which protection by patenting or publication is sought.

1. Amount/Timing.

(a) An invention award of at least \$300 is granted when an employee's invention has been favorably searched and a patent application has been filed. In the case of joint inventors, each inventor is nominated for an equal share of the initial award except that the share to each inventor must be no less than \$100.

(b) Further awards, up to \$35,000, may be granted for an invention owned by the U.S. Government whenever the invention benefits the public as evidenced by the number of patent licenses granted, reports on commercialization from patent licenses, and other information pertaining to the commercial use of the invention; or the invention is used by and benefits the government.

(c) Employees are eligible to receive a cash award in any year that royalty-bearing licenses covering their inventions are in effect. (See DAO 202-452, "Incentive Awards for Federal Inventors," dated June 3, 1977.)

2. Process.

(a) After receiving notification of a filed patent application, the Office of General Counsel informs the inventor's organization and recommends that Form CD-326, "Recommendation for Award," be prepared, and also advises the NOAA IAPO.

(b) The awarding official approves the recommendation. The IAPO forwards the award proposal to the payroll office for payment if it conforms with requirements.

(c) Invention awards to SES members must be approved by the Secretary through the same channels as performance bonuses.

SECTION 5. NON-MONETARY AND HONORARY AWARDS. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 POLICY.

- a. Non-monetary awards are medals, certificates, plaques, citations, badges, or other award items that can be worn or displayed and have an award or honor connotation.
- b. These awards are used to recognize distinguished achievements or significant contributions that benefit the government.
- c. To be eligible to receive an award, an employee must have a current rating of "Meets or Exceeds" or "Eligible."

.02 TYPES OF AWARDS.

a. **BRONZE MEDAL.** The Bronze Medal Award is the highest honorary award given by a head of an operating unit or Secretarial Officer or equivalent. A Bronze Medal is defined as *superior* performance characterized by outstanding or significant contributions which have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the operating unit. To warrant a Bronze Medal, a contribution must focus on qualitative and quantitative performance measures cited in the Department's Strategic Plan and be identified in one of the following areas: leadership, personal and professional excellence, scientific/engineering achievement, employee development, customer service, administrative/technical support, or public service or heroism. The award may be given to individuals, groups, or organizations. A Gold or Silver Medal nomination disapproved at the Department level will automatically receive a Bronze Medal Award that same year.

1. Recipient Categories.

- (a) Individual - each individual receives a framed, engraved medal and certificate, and a lapel pin.
- (b) Group - a group consists of a number of individuals working together, where each person makes a specific substantive contribution to the achievement being recognized. Each group member receives a framed, engraved medal and certificate, and a lapel pin.
- (c) Organization - an organization may be either an office, division, or subunit which is formally recognized as a separate entity, or an ad hoc organization assembled to work on a specific project. A single organization is one office, division, or subunit where all or most of the people work together on a specific project. The single organization receives an engraved medal and a framed certificate. A joint organizational award consists of two or more offices or subunits working together to complete a specific project. Each organization receives a framed, engraved medal with a certificate.

2. Submission Requirements.

- (a) All employees may submit nominations.
- (b) Justifications for individuals may be up to two pages.

For groups, one page for the group effort and up to one page detailing each individual's contribution may be submitted. A group nomination having more than 10 members must be accompanied by a one page justification which explains the higher number. Nominations for organizations may be up to two pages and should include the name of the individual who will accept the award on behalf of the organization.

- (c) Nominations should clearly describe the contribution to be recognized, its impact on NOAA or the Department, and the extent to which the contribution exceeds normal performance expectations. It should also specify how the contribution meets one or more of the criteria listed below.
- (d) All nominations must comply with directions and submission requirements specific to individual organizations.

3. **Criteria.** Contributions must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) leadership - recognizes personal leadership and management of an organization that produces substantial, innovative achievements, resulting in high-quality service to the agency;
- (b) personal and professional excellence - recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in furthering the agency's mission;
- (c) scientific/engineering achievement - recognizes scientific/engineering or technological breakthroughs that resolve longstanding problems; radically advance state-of-the-art, significantly impact DOC or the economy, or significantly advance the understanding, knowledge, or mastery of a given discipline;
- (d) employee development - recognizes those whose accomplishments contribute to creating an organizational culture that is constantly learning and growing; one which maximizes employee potential and fosters high ethical standards;
- (e) customer service - recognizes those who provide or foster a culture which nurtures world-class customer service;
- (f) administrative/technical support - recognizes those who demonstrate an outstanding level of accomplishment in providing administrative and technical support; and

(g) public service or heroism - recognizes quality service demonstrated by substantial improvement in productivity or services, an increase in the quality of life of Americans, or more cost-effective agency programs or services.

b. TIME-OFF AWARD. This award may be given to eligible employees to recognize achievements and/or contributions. It is an excused absence granted without charge to leave or loss of pay, and it is independent of other types of awards. It should be given when it is more appropriate than monetary or honorary awards.

1. Eligibility.

All NOAA employees are eligible for this award except:

1) Officers appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, or by the President alone, to positions for which rates of basic compensation may exceed the maximum rate provided in the General Schedule; 2) employees who do not have a regular, established tour of duty prescribed in advance (i.e., employees who are intermittent); 3) employees paid on a fee basis; 4) NOAA Corps Officers; and 5) employees in the Senior Executive Service.

2. Policy.

(a) The total amount of time off granted to a full-time employee as an incentive award for a single contribution is up to 40 hours, and may not exceed 80 hours, during a leave year. Total time off for a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty may not exceed the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty.

(b) The minimum time-off award is a half day (half of the scheduled work hours for the employee on the day of the excused absence). If the employee's work day is not an even number of hours, the half day must be rounded up so that the amount of leave granted is in multiples of one-hour units.

(c) Time off granted as an incentive award must be scheduled and taken within 1 year after the effective date of the award. Scheduling time off is subject to supervisory approval.

(d) The amount of time off should be proportionate to the value of the contribution being recognized.

(e) If an employee is incapacitated for duty during a period of time-off absence, that period of absence may be recorded as sick leave, and the time off scheduled for another time within the limits of paragraph b.(1)(c).

3. Authority.

The authority to approve time-off awards is delegated to heads of LOs/SOs/POs. This authority may be redelegated in writing to any leave approving official. **EXCEPTION:** Per DAO 202-451, award periods in excess of one full duty day must be reviewed and approved by an official higher in the organization than the award initiator.

4. Processing.

The award must be recommended and approved in writing on Form CD-326, and the amount of time should be indicated. Item 8, "Narrative," must include a brief but specific description of the reason for the award. The CD-326 is signed by the recommending and approving official and forwarded to the SHRO. The SHRO will process the award and document it with an SF-50.

c. ON-THE-SPOT AWARDS. The purpose of this award is to provide supervisors with a means of recognizing employees with merchandise-type items, for those day-to-day efforts which contribute "in a special way" to getting the job done. This program provides for immediate recognition with minimal documentation for non-recurring contributions. This program is not meant to replace other methods of recognition, but rather to increase the supervisor's options for rewarding employees.

1. Eligibility.

NOAA Corps Officers and members of the Senior Executive Service are not eligible for this award.

2. Policy.

(a) LO/SO/POs may implement on-the-spot award programs which meet their specific needs and are compatible with their organizational climate. If utilized, this program must be described in the award implementation plan signed by the head of the LO/SO/PO, and the plan must be consistent with the NOAA On-The-Spot Award Program approved on August 12, 1993. Specifically, the plan must include:

- (1) types of contributions which qualify for recognition;
- (2) who is eligible to participate;
- (3) delegations of authority;
- (4) award items that will be given out under the program and dollar values;
- (5) plans for procuring, distributing, and controlling access to supplies of these items;
- (6) frequency and timing of awards;
- (7) procedures for notifying employees and supervisors about the program; and

(8) record keeping requirements.

(b) The value of an individual merchandise award may not exceed \$75, and should be at least \$25. Under this program, an employee may not receive awards which exceed \$125 in value in a single performance year. Supervisors are responsible for assuring compliance with this limitation.

(c) Good judgment should be exercised when awarding informal recognition items. A basic principle is that their primary value should be as a form of recognition that has a lasting memento value and not as an object with monetary value. Be particularly sensitive to public perceptions that could arise from granting expensive, non-monetary award items.

3. Authority.

The expenditure of funds for such items is authorized by the statutory language in 5 U.S.C. 4503, which permits agency heads to pay cash awards to and incur necessary expenses for the honorary recognition of employees. Suggested guidelines for the awards are listed below:

(a) the award should be honorary in nature;

(b) the award should be able to be worn, displayed, or used in the recipient's work environment;

(c) the award should include the DOC, NOAA, or/LO/SO/PO seal or logo;

(d) the award should be presented to the employee shortly after the contribution.

4. Processing.

The award should be documented with a brief and to-the-point narrative justification on form CD-326. Once the award has been approved, the supervisor should make the presentation to the employee in the presence of his/her peers.

d. UNIT CITATIONS. A Unit Citation recognizes groups of employees who, because of their individual and collective efforts, have made substantive contributions to NOAA's programs. There is no monetary reward associated with the Unit Citation. The award consists of a Unit Plaque and individual certificates for each participant.

1. Policy.

(a) Consideration for a Unit Citation is given, but not limited to, those contributions which:

(1) are outstanding enough to bring unusual credit and/or favorable attention to NOAA and DOC;

(2) result in greatly advancing or furthering NOAA programs;

(3) accomplish significant savings or improvements in NOAA's operating programs; or

(4) represent outstanding service to the public.

(b) Unit Citation nominations may be made at any time using Form CD-326.

2. Processing.

(a) The nomination will be submitted to the LO/SO/PO approving official for review and approval.

(b) After approval, the certificates and plaque will be obtained and prepared by the LO/SO/PO. Unit Citation certificates are signed by the Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. The LO/SO/PO will arrange for this signature and maintain a record of recipients.

e. RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES.

(1) **Certificates of Appreciation.** There are two types of Certificates of Appreciation:

(a) Certificates 11" x 14" in size (CD-522*) are granted to non-employees of NOAA who have made outstanding contributions or who have performed significant services for the agency. They may be signed by the Secretary, Secretarial Officer, or Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, and presented by an appropriate official, depending on the nature and significance of the contribution.

(b) Certificates 8½ x 11 (CD-521*) in size are granted to employees and student volunteers for honorary recognition, significant accomplishments, or appreciation of their services. They are signed and presented by the head of the LO/SO/PO, or other official if appropriate.

(2) **Certificates of Recognition (CD-184*).** These certificates are granted to employees who receive Special Act or Service, or QSI Awards. The CD-184s are obtained and prepared by the LO/SO/PO and presented to employees in an appropriate ceremony.

(3) **Length-of-Service Certificates**.** These certificates are granted to employees to recognize service of at least 10 years in 5-year increments. Note: Information pertaining to employee eligibility for length of service recognition is available through the Human Resources Data System. The certificates are obtained and prepared by the LO/SO/PO and presented to the employee by the supervisor or other higher-level official within the organization.

(4) **Other Length-of-Service Recognition.** Lapel pins, charms, and tie tacks are also available to recognize 5-year increments of employees' service. These tokens of appreciation for service performed are obtained by the LO/SO/POs and presented to employees along with the certificate.

* Certificates may be ordered from the DOC Forms Store - 202-482-4765.

** May be ordered from GSA.

SECTION 6. LO/SO/PO-SPECIFIC AWARDS. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 These awards were established to recognize an employee (or employees) of the specific LO/SO/PO who have made significant contributions to that organization and/or its programs and missions. There are four approved LO/SO/PO specific awards. They are: 1) National Ocean Service Employee of the Year; 2) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Employee of the Year; 3) Office of Finance and Administration Employee of the Year; and 4) NOAA General Counsel's Award for Outstanding Achievements.

.02 Information on the approved awards must be made available to all employees, preferably through the LO/SO/PO incentive awards implementation plan. It must indicate the number of awards to be presented, what the award will be, e.g., money (to include amounts), plaque, certificate, merchandise, etc., and the manner in which the award will be presented.

.03 If the award is monetary, the LO/SO/PO must forward a copy of the completed, approved CD-326 to the SHRO for input into the personnel/payroll system. The SHRO will notify the supervisor of the effective date. The LO/SO/PO will prepare the certificate, plaque, etc., and make arrangements to present the award.

.04 Requests for approval of new awards must be forwarded to DOC for approval, through the NOAA IAPO, and must indicate:

- a. length of service required;
- b. category of employee to be considered (individuals or groups, supervisory or non-supervisory);
- c. type of achievement to be considered;
- d. when nominations will be requested;
- e. who can nominate an employee;
- f. format for nominations;
- g. where to send nominations;

- h. who will review the nominations;
- i. when the decision will be made; and
- j. when the award will be presented.

SECTION 7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 AAs and NOAA SO/PO Directors are delegated the authority to approve Special Act or Service Awards (up to \$5,000), QSIs, CIYA Awards, Time-Off Awards, On-the Spot Awards, and Unit Citations. This approval authority may be redelegated, in writing, to any subordinate supervisor. Each LO/SO/PO must maintain a written summary record of these delegations. Approving officials are held accountable for the judicious execution of their incentive awards responsibilities. Accountability will be emphasized through all levels of the delegation of authority chain from recommending official to AAs and NOAA SO/PO Directors.

.02 The effectiveness of the incentive awards program is assessed through NOAA's ongoing oversight program. Evaluations focus on: (1) the satisfaction of supervisors and employees with the program; (2) NOAA's technical compliance with the pertinent laws, Office of Personnel Management regulations, and DOC/NOAA policy; (3) the ability of NOAA's program to adequately acknowledge and reward significant achievements and ideas; (4) NOAA's adherence to the merit systems principles, particularly the requirement to distribute awards fairly without regard to race, national origin, sex, or other non-merit factors; and (5) the ability of the program to successfully encourage employees toward increased productivity and creativity and to support and enhance the achievement of strategic and operating plan goals. In addition, SHROs will review a sampling of processed awards to ensure compliance with the technical requirements (e.g., proper signatures, adequate justification, etc.) and provide written feedback to the originating office.

SECTION 8. TRAINING AND INFORMATION. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

SHROs are responsible for establishing appropriate training and orientation programs on the purpose and procedures of the incentive awards program.

SECTION 9. RECORD KEEPING. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

.01 Incentive awards records and related documents will be maintained in accordance with the provisions of this document, the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, other legislative and regulatory requirements, and negotiated agreements.

- a. The original copy of the completed and approved award forms (e.g., CD-170, CD-326) must be retained in the Employee Performance File (EPF) for a minimum of 3 years. Monetary awards will be further documented with a SF-50B, Notice of Personnel Action, filed with the employee's Official Personnel Folder.

b. In addition, automated records may be retained for statistical analysis.

.02 When an employee transfers from one LO/SO/PO to another, the incentive awards records must be transferred. These records must be purged from the EPF, however, when an employee transfers from one operating unit to another with DOC or another Federal agency.

SECTION 10. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES. [\[Top of Page\]](#)

This Order supersedes NOAA Administrative Order 202-451, NOAA Incentive Awards Program, dated April 6, 1989.

SIGNED,

Acting Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer

[Attachment](#)

Office of Primary Interest:

Office of Finance and Administration

Human Resources Management Office (OFA41)

[\[Top of Page\]](#)